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ANIMALS IN THE ANCIENT WORLD

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Monsters

**Animal Trials
Were No
Kangaroo
Court!**

**Are Humans Just
Self-Domesticated
Apes?**

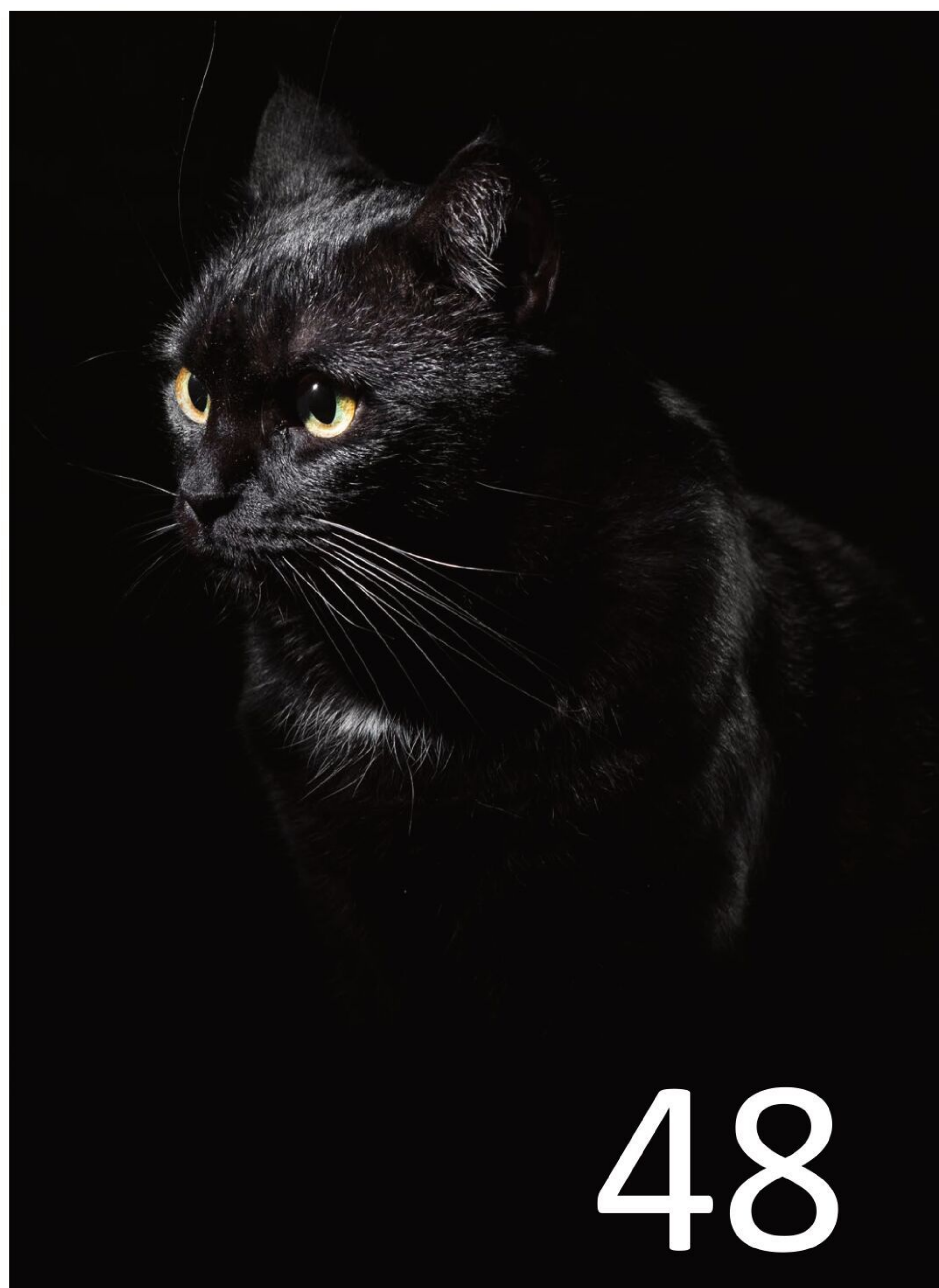
plus **Deadly Female Ninja Assassins with Wolverine Claws**

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SPOTLIGHT: ANIMALS IN THE ANCIENT WORLD

From our earliest days we have been cohabiting the planet with animals. They've been regarded as pets and pests, considered sacred, been sacrificed, and used for resources and labor. Animals have been integral to every aspect of our lives – we encounter them in the wild, public arenas, our homes, and of course, our art. They've been hunted, herded, sheltered, and loved.

In this issue we explore our complex cohabitation with animals around the world and since prehistoric times. Archaeozoologist Dr. Annie Antonites reveals how faunal remains at archaeological sites provide unique insight into the relationship between ancient people and animals. In some cases, such as the extinct dodo, we have to turn to the remains to discover the truth – it was not the dumb bird some fairy tales would suggest!

Artifacts also reveal much about a society's perspective on different animals. For example, a mechanical dog housed in the MET shines light on one of our species' favorite companions. While the ancient Egyptians famously revered the slinky, clever cat, and worshiped feline-headed deities, did you know they were apparently "obsessed" with their dogs too?

To discover more about the relationships between cultures and creatures, we trace the paths of elephants from battlefields to the big top, and ponder why some cultures have loved hedgehogs while others despised them. We turn to art and literature for



ALICIA McDERMOTT
Chief Editor, Ancient Origins Magazine

insight too. Be it the image of a spider in a Moche temple or the colorful tales of "monsters" in the pages of Medieval bestiaries, we can see how animals have been used as symbols reflecting human beliefs throughout time. Animal trials further reveal the bizarre way animals reflected perceptions of morality and the complex relationship between man and beast in the Middle Ages.

This issue also examines the strange story of a Viking ship allegedly lost in a Californian desert, and the powerful, deadly kunoichi – female ninjas who sometimes sported poison-coated wolverine claws to assassinate their targets!

There are not enough pages to discuss all the ways we have lived with, loved, and sometimes feared animals, but this issue reveals how our relationships and thoughts on animals not only reflect our view of nature, but also the nature of humanity itself.

EXPERTS IN THIS ISSUE...



DR. ANNIE ANTONITES

Dr. Annie R. Antonites has participated in archaeological excavations in the Bolivian Altiplano, Mongolian Gobi Desert, and all over South Africa. She is one of a few archaeozoologists working on the African continent and has done research on faunal collections from Botswana, Egypt, Ghana, Madagascar, South Africa, and Zambia. She is currently employed as a senior researcher at The Heritage Foundation in Pretoria, South Africa.



MS. JAYSHREE MUNGUR-MEDHI

Ms. Jayshree Mungur-Medhi is an archaeologist and heritage expert in Mauritius. She has contributed to various projects in several countries, including those of global interest as UNESCO nomination dossiers for World Heritage Properties, namely Aapravasi Ghat and Le Morne Cultural Landscape in Mauritius and Rani ki Vav in India, and Intangible Cultural Heritage.

HISTORY

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and we are destined to
become part of it



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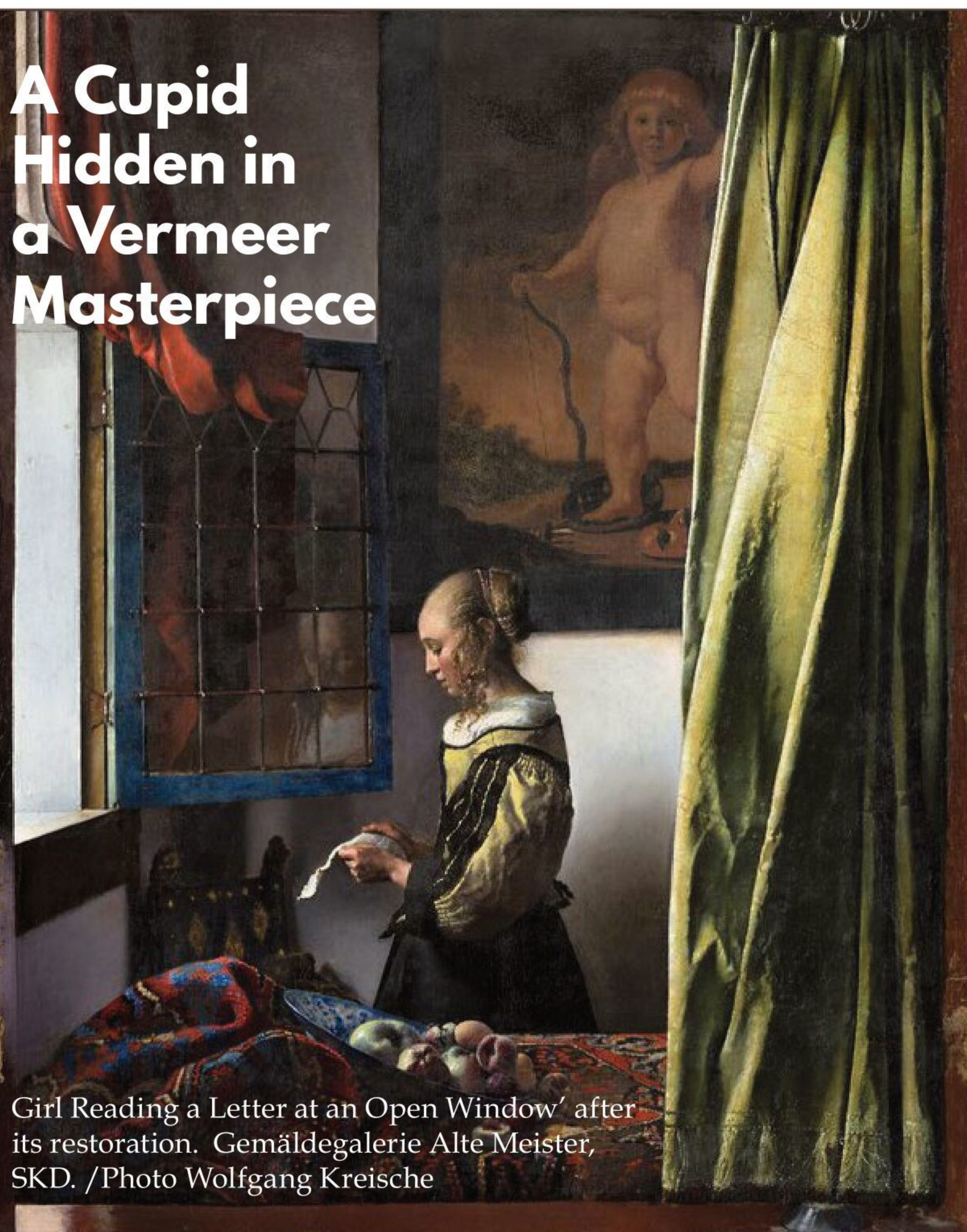


Pre-Viking Gold Discovered in Denmark

A hoard of ancient gold, dating back 1,500 years, was recently discovered at a site called “Vindelev,” not far from Jelling in central Jutland, Denmark by a metal detectorist. Jelling was an important royal monument site during the 10th century reigns of Gorm the Old and his son Harald Bluetooth, however, this hoard pre-dates the Vikings by 500 years. The Vindelev treasure consists of saucer-sized, beautifully decorated medallions, Roman coins, as well as a heavy gold coin dated to the reign of Roman Emperor Constantine the Great, between 285-337 AD. The hoard was found hidden in an Iron Age longhouse belonging to a wealthy man. It will be exhibited at the Vejle Museum.



A Cupid Hidden in a Vermeer Masterpiece



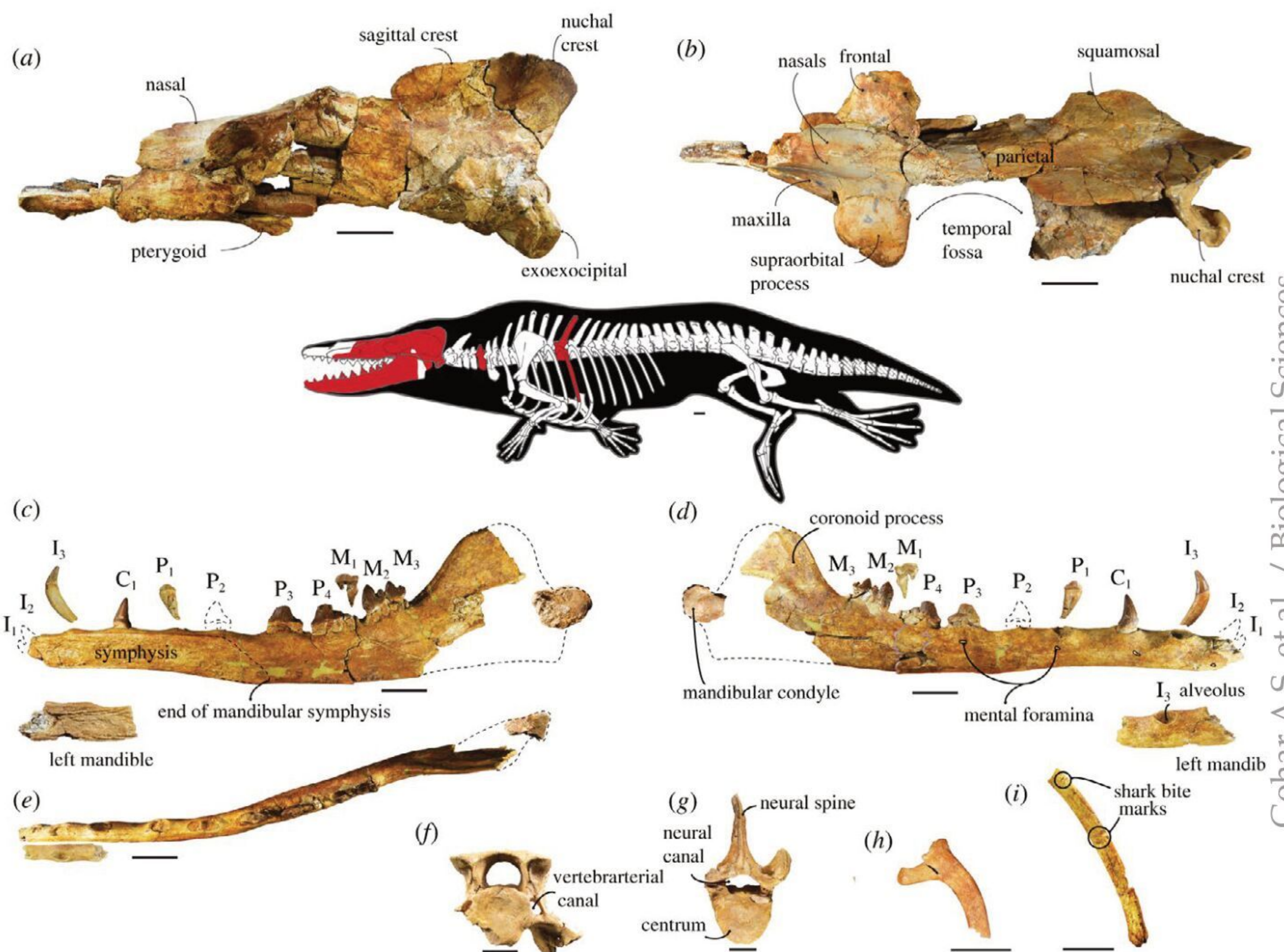
'Girl Reading a Letter at an Open Window' after its restoration. Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister, SKD. /Photo Wolfgang Kreische

Vermeer's 17th-century masterpiece 'Girl Reading a Letter at an Open Window' has finally been restored to reveal a hidden Cupid, which was originally discovered in 1979, when the composition was analyzed with X-rays at the Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister in Dresden, Germany. The painting was altered long after Vermeer's death. The Cupid is carrying a bow and standing on top of two discarded masks, representing the past denial of two people involved in a romantic relationship (the young woman reading the letter and the person who wrote it). The open window in the painting is a symbolic expression of the young woman's desire to escape the limits of her domestic lifestyle, and the bowl of fruit sitting on the bed is understood as a symbol of extramarital relations - a type of forbidden fruit. The Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister has created a special exhibition to re-introduce a "new" Vermeer to the art-loving public. The fully restored 'Girl Reading a Letter at an Open Window' will be on display alongside nine other Vermeer paintings.

Four-Legged Whale Named After Death God Anubis

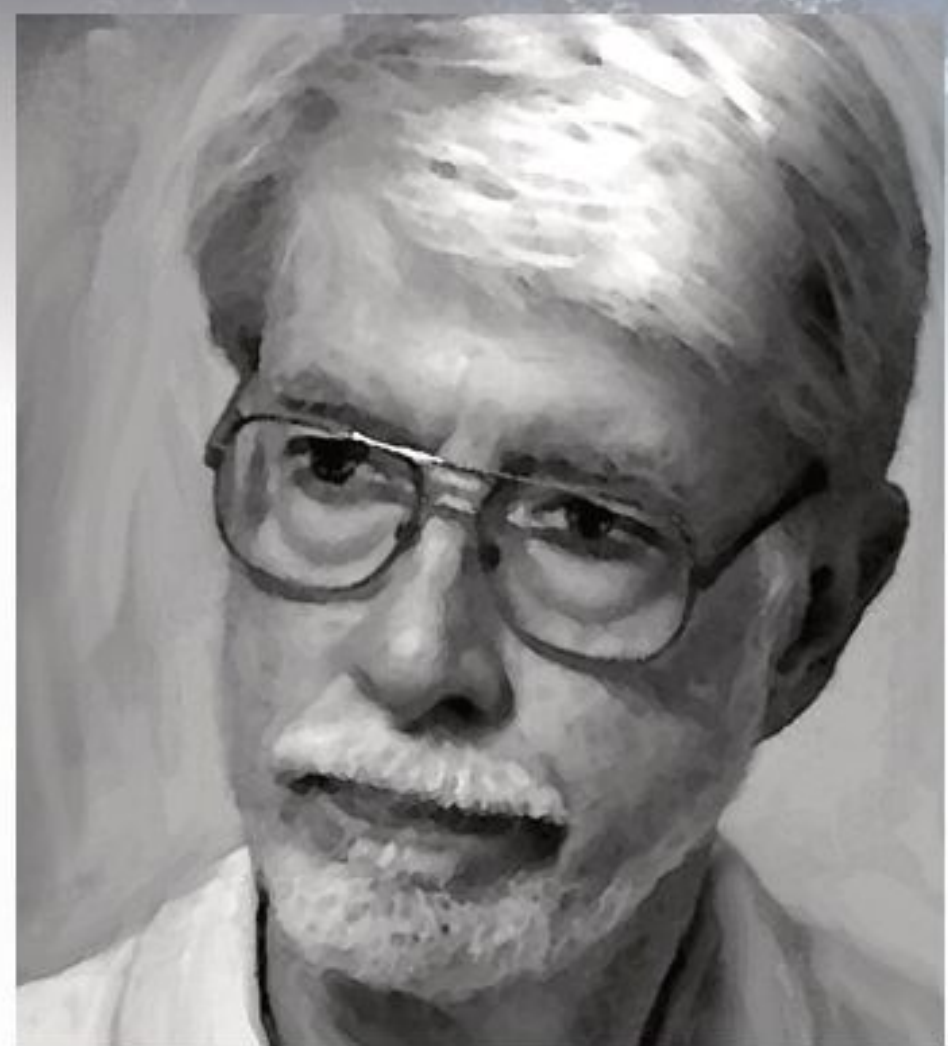
Egyptian paleontologists have identified a new four-legged whale species that walked on land more than 43 million years ago, and they named it *Phiomicetus anubis*, in honor of the ancient Egyptian god of the dead, Anubis. The Egyptian paleontologists were inspired by the shape of its head, which bore a striking resemblance to the skull of the jackal-headed god Anubis, whose frightening appearance symbolized impending death.

Phiomicetus anubis represents a whole new species, with relatively primitive characteristics that identify it as the oldest semi-aquatic whale species ever found in Africa. The fossilized partial skeleton of the four-legged whale fossil find was unearthed from a layer of rocks in the Fayum Depression, a fossil-rich area in Egypt's Western Desert, which during the middle Eocene geological epoch was mostly covered by a vast sea, and the whale skeleton would have been preserved originally in an area along the coast of that sea.



The holotype of *Phiomicetus Anubis*.

ORIGINS RISING



For a quarter century, J. Douglas Kenyon was editor and publisher of *Atlantis Rising Magazine*. For more information visit the web site AtlantisRising.com

J. DOUGLAS KENYON

In June of 2021, *Express*, the British Newspaper, became the latest to tell the story that an anomalous stone circle resembling Stonehenge had been uncovered beneath the waters of

America's Lake Michigan. For his facts, reporter Joel Day relied mostly on a *Discovery TV* documentary filmed in 2017. The story has actually been reported for years by many outlets. My own publication, *Atlantis Rising Magazine*, first covered the possibility of a Stonehenge-like stone circle in North America in 2009. At the time, at least two researchers were making such claims, not only beneath the waters of Lake Michigan, but in the fields of Alberta in Canada.

Gordon Freeman, retired professor from the University of Alberta, had written *Canada's Stonehenge*, a book arguing that "Genius existed on the prairies 5,000 years ago." Freeman believes the indigenous Majorville Cairn and Medicine Wheel site, south of Bassano, Alberta is actually a precise 5,000-year-old calendar. Britain's Stonehenge was a calendar too, he says. Freeman investigated the astronomical alignment of boulders at the site and

determined that the central cairn is surrounded by 28 radiating stone lines, four of which align with the cardinal points of the compass. Freeman was also able to show that, among other things, the site marks the equinoxes and precisely measures the lunar cycle.

Meanwhile, at the department of underwater archaeology at Northwestern Michigan University College (Traverse City) Professor Mark Holley, using sonar imaging, discovered in 2007, 40 feet below the surface of Lake Michigan, a series of standing stones, with some arranged in a perfect circle. Holley's work was summarized in the *Express* story. Perhaps even more remarkable, though, was what appeared to be the petroglyph of an extinct mastodon, memorializing some ancient encounter between humans and the animal—a woolly-mammoth-resembling elephant-like creature ("Lake Michigan's Mastodon—Has the Ice Age Image of a Mastodon been Found in Lake Michigan?" Frank Joseph, *Atlantis Rising Magazine* #76, July/August, 2009). The petroglyph would have been below the surface for about 10,000 years. Since Mastodon remains had previously been reported only in southern Michigan, far from the underwater circle, most archaeologists in 2009 were skeptical, but recent evidence

Scanned underwater site in Lake Michigan, courtesy of Mark Holley.

of massive megafauna extinctions at the end of the last ice age, also known as the Younger Dryas, make a prior mastodon presence in the region plausible.

Researcher Joseph, editor of *Ancient American Magazine* and a correspondent for *Atlantis Rising*, explained that, though Holley's discovery was the first underwater discovery of its kind, other examples of prehistoric American art also depict extinct mastodons. He cites three examples: the earliest, in 1864,

DEEP WATERS

Today anomalous discoveries of all kinds are becoming more commonplace, as a new breed of independent archaeologist deploys tools provided on the internet to investigate without getting their hands dirty. As I report in my new book *Ghosts of Atlantis*, imaging satellites are doing a lot of the heavy lifting, and 'out-of-place' artifacts (also known as: 'oop arts') have come to light in locations as far flung as Cambodia's Angkor Wat, Egypt's Giza plateau, the coast of India, and Antarctica's Lake Vostok.

In one remarkable case, amateur archaeologist John Jenson used images from Google Earth to show details of what appears to be an advanced water-wise canal-building culture in Florida before the end of the last ice age. The mysterious domain that Jenson reveals was apparently "extremely sophisticated," with "precisely-engineered channels" that he thinks were for agriculture, navigation, and habitat. Some canals were 300 to 500 feet wide and continue for many miles in exactly straight lines. The structures, he thought, were on par with those in today's technology. Admittedly not an archaeological professional, Jenson has still managed to assemble some very puzzling imagery.

Since the 1990s, in a quest for a

more elevated image of Earth's past, American researcher and 'Lost-Civilization' enthusiast Angela Micol has scoured public domain databases, from Landsat to Google Earth, for anomalous satellite photography.

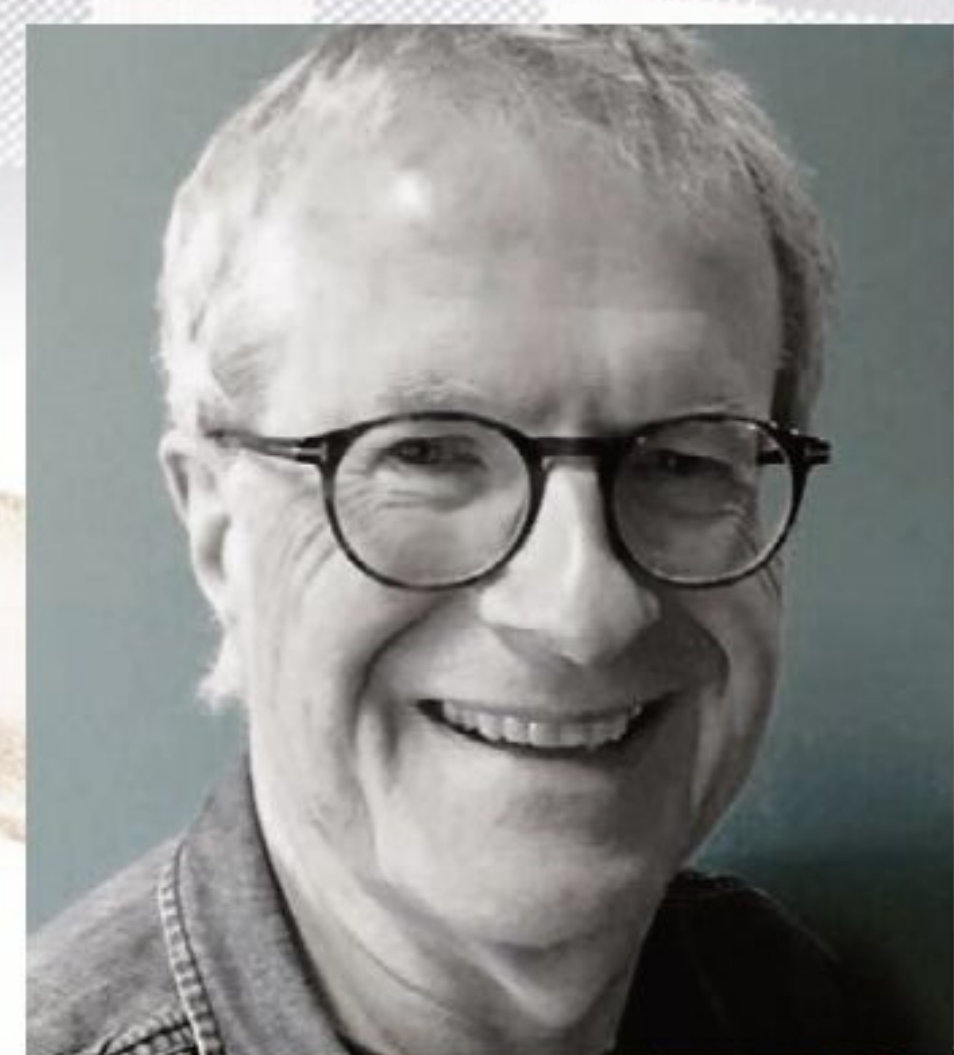
A growing interest in such imagery, some believe, could signal a dawning awareness that ancient formations may preserve advanced—if long lost—knowledge from times generally believed to be entirely primitive, but which were, seemingly, anything but.



A diver with the 'Mastodon Image.'

For a quarter century J. Douglas Kenyon was editor and publisher of 'Atlantis Rising Magazine.' His new book, 'Ghosts of Atlantis' is published by Inner Traditions/Bear and Company. For more information visit the web site AtlantisRising.com.

came from a peat bog near Holly Oak, Delaware. Eight years later, a farm boy near Doylestown, Pennsylvania, plowed up a five-inch-long stone, covered on one side with strange symbols, and on the other with what appeared to be a pictographic account of an Indian encounter with a mammoth. Another example, near Moab, Utah, was, according to Joseph, marked with carvings clearly intended to represent an elephant or mastodon.



CHARLES CHRISTIAN

Charles Christian is a barrister and Reuters correspondent turned writer, award-winning tech journalist, radio presenter, podcaster, blogger, storyteller, and sometime werewolf-hunter who presents a weekly podcast: the *Weird Tales Radio Show*

As I have said many times before in this series, no matter how fantastical some of these fabulous creatures may seem, if you scratch deep beneath the surface of the legend, you will find a nugget of truth –

albeit a nugget of truth that has been distorted by time, misunderstanding, and ignorance. No more is this so than in the case of the ‘Barometz’ or Vegetable Lamb of Tartary, which, as the name implies, was once believed to be a species of plant that grew sheep as its fruit.

Technically, this would have been a ‘zoophyte’, a now discredited concept of an organism that is part animal and part plant – but the Vegetable Lamb was originally chronicled in the mid-14th century and the concept of the zoophyte was not finally discredited until the early 19th century, so we cannot criticize the science of the first people who described Barometz or Vegetable Lambs. So where did the legend of this thing, also known as the Scythian Lamb, begin?

The Vegetable Lamb of Tartary

No Mint Sauce Required*

The first full report occurs in *The Travels of Sir John Mandeville*, a travel memoir that appeared between the years 1357 and 1371 and which purports to be the journal of an English knight from the town of St Albans – except Sir John never existed. Instead, the most likely candidate for the author is a 14th century Liège (now in Belgium) physician called Jehan de Bourgogne, who compiled *The Travels* from extracts stolen from other authors’ work – including Friar Odoric of Pordenone – interwoven with complete flights of fancy. There is also no evidence Jehan de Bourgogne ever visited ‘Tartary’ – a term used to describe what we would now call Central Asia – unlike Friar Odoric, who travelled extensively throughout Central Asia, India, and China.

But what about the Vegetable Lamb? This, with the assistance of some misunderstanding of Chinese legends by Friar Odoric, actually seems to be based on a lack of knowledge of textiles by Medieval Europeans.

The most widely worn clothing material was wool, which comes from sheep, so when the first cotton garments began to appear in Western Europe, coming from Egypt, India, and other exotic locations within Tartary, it was assumed they must have come from a special type of lamb. At the same time there were also the first reports of cotton plants and cotton bolls being seen in the wild.

Somewhere along the way the two ideas became intermingled and combined, giving birth to the belief that the fluffy cotton bolls were a type of baby sheep that lived on a plant – hence the Vegetable Lamb. In fact it was even posited the way the lamb derived nutrients was that the stalk of the plant could flex downwards, allowing the lamb to feed on the grass and plants surrounding it. The lamb’s flesh, incidentally, was said to taste of honey!

It all sounds laughable now but it was not until the late 17th century – nearly 350 years after *The Travels of Sir John Mandeville* was first published – that the fabled Vegetable Lamb of Tartary was recognized to be just that: a fable.

* In British and Irish cuisine, mint sauce is typically served with roast lamb. ■

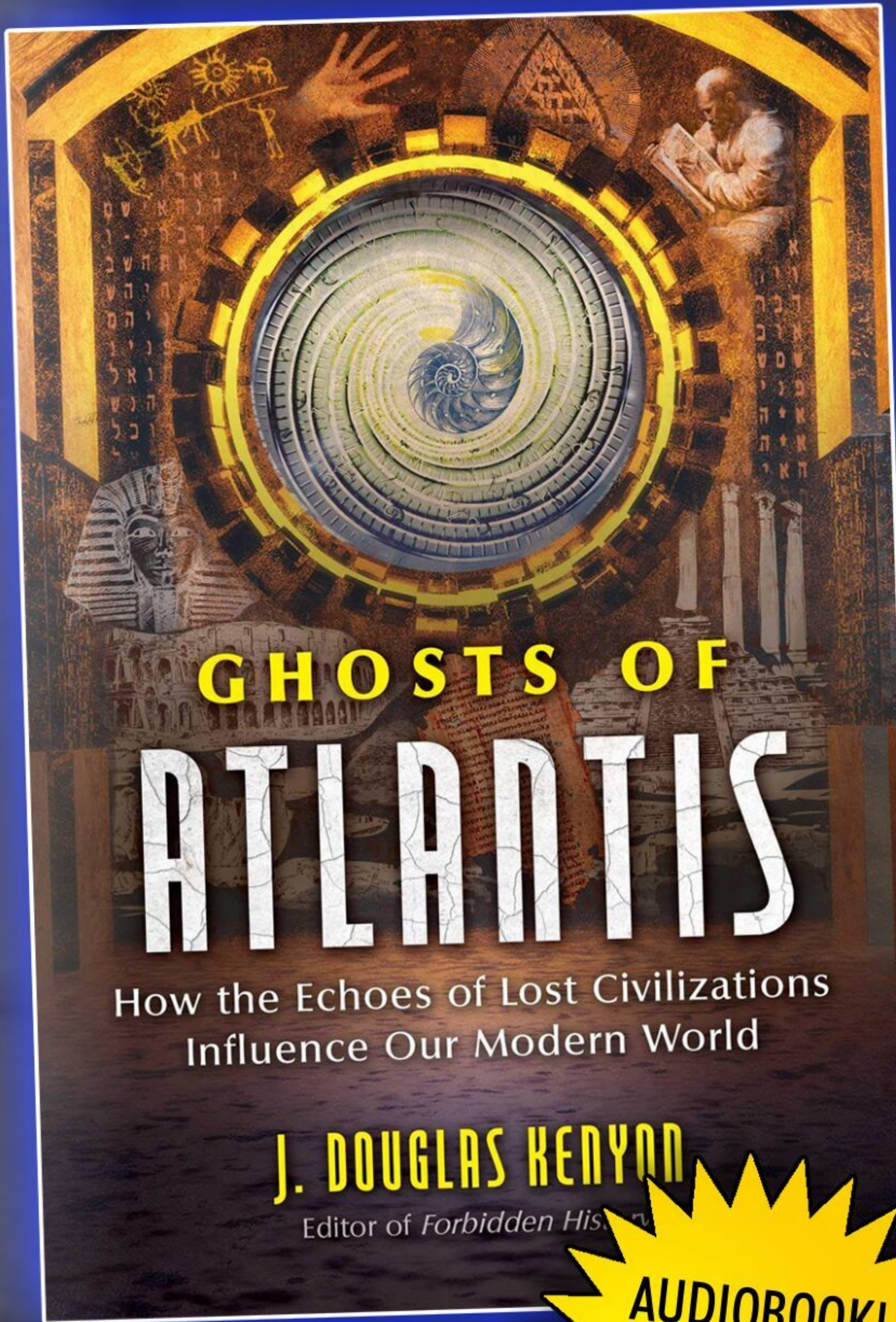


1887 illustration of a Vegetable Lamb by Lee.

Public Domain

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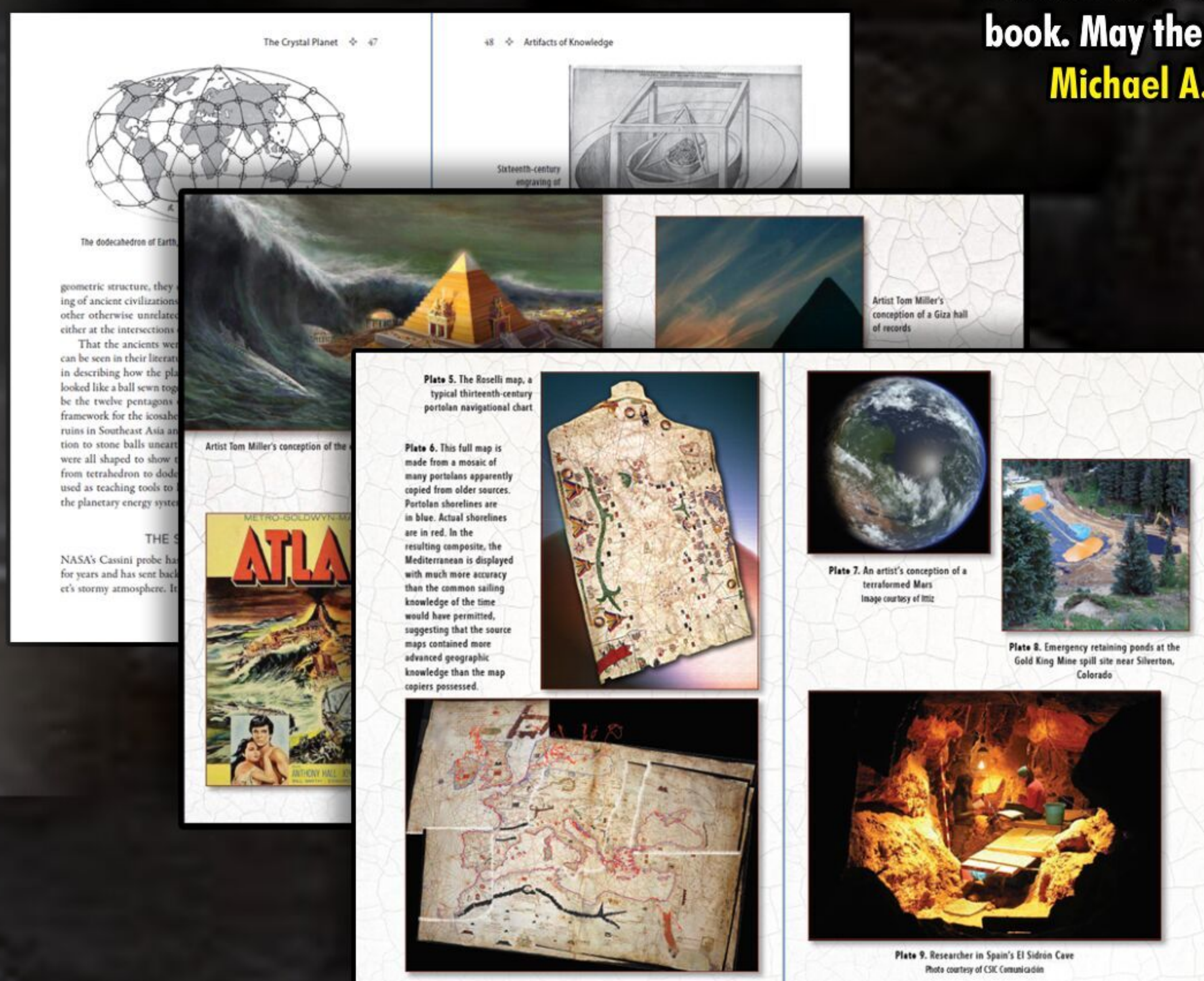
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KUNOICHI

DEADLY FEMALE NINJA ASSASSINS WITH WOLVERINE CLAWS

|| BY RILEY WINTERS

Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles got a lot of ninja qualities right: their preference for sticking to the shadows, the emphasis on reconnaissance and espionage, and, of course, their choice of weapons all adhere to the ninja "code". The one thing that could have put such an intriguing children's show over the top would have been the inclusion of a female ninja turtle. But do women have a place in war or espionage apart from the stereotypical "damsel in distress" character in the original cartoon?

IT might be interesting for some fans of the Ninja Turtles—or fans of the history of ninja warriors—to learn that women did participate in the art of ninjutsu. In fact, these *kunoichi* were among the most elite and skilled of the ninja class.

Kunoichi were among the most elite and skilled of the ninja class.

Ninja, *shinobi*, and kunoichi were practitioners of the espionage based military tactic called *ninjutsu*, belonging to the Japanese class of shinobi. It is often incorrectly assumed that ninjas were strictly males, particularly in historical contexts, because of the prevalence of male dominated societies in which women were relegated to the background either as wives or figureheads (if royal). However, women worked alongside men, as powerful stealthy assets in the shinobi clans (shinobi is the "correct" title for ninja warriors) in groups called kunoichi.

The kunoichi are recorded as powerful devotees of ninjutsu in the 17th century in a tome called *Bansenshukai*, a collection of ninja training secrets. Kunoichi warriors seemingly predate their documentation in this text—by how long, it is uncertain. Yet one woman, Mochizuki Chiyome, is believed to have successfully created a secret kunoichi cohort in feudal Japan in the 16th century.





USING WOMANLY WILES TO THEIR DEADLY ADVANTAGE

The consistent belief that women were no more than beautiful arm candy or ignorant wives boded well for the kunoichi, as it allowed them to get close to their targets—usually men of the samurai class—either to gain information or to kill. While men were always on the lookout for suspicious men, rarely were they on the lookout for suspicious women. Women were far more likely to be able to maintain their disguises than men, as the samurai rarely hired strange men for advice, aid, or protection, but they readily took on concubines or pretty mistresses.

Thus, kunoichi often disguised themselves as performers, courtesans, maids, and Shinto priestesses, which enabled them to gain access to the most intimate aspects of the samurai's life. (Priestesses were not prohibited from travel as it was

Kunoichi often disguised themselves as performers, courtesans, maids, and Shinto priestesses.

considered part of their religious education.) Women were therefore able to infiltrate deeper than men in more dangerous zones; if a samurai ever found out the depth of the deception he had fallen for, the price a woman would have had to pay for such intimate betrayal would likely have been worse than those of an exposed shinobi.



Yet, as horrifying as the punishments for discovered kunoichi likely were, when it was necessary to assassinate their targets, their executions were equally—if not more—terrible for their cunning and craftiness.

WEAPONS OF CHOICE FOR FEMALE ASSASSINS

While female ninjas used their sexuality and beauty to gain access to their targets, they did not step aside for a male ninja to take out the target when he was most vulnerable. Rather, the women took care of assassinations themselves. Some poignant weapons used were rather typical of those shown in historical spy and ninja movies today: fans with hidden blades, daggers, various forms of poison, slim katana swords, and the famous throwing stars.

Yet, the weapon of choice for the kunoichi was, essentially, wolverine claws. Made of "leather finger sheaths topped with sharpened metal 'claws,'" the *neko-te* were the next best thing to possessing feline claws. The metal weapons ranged from one to three inches in length - easily long enough and sharp enough to tear away a man's flesh. A particularly vindictive female might even dip her claws in poison to exacerbate pain or, if she was feeling kind, quicken death.

Regardless of the common misconceptions about the gender of ninjas, the kunoichi definitively had a place in both feudal and shogun-centered Japan. Women like Mochizuki Chiyome took up arms to risk life and limb to gain access to powerful enemies and ensure the protection of their leaders and government. Though few kunoichi are known by name, those that are reveal that these women were, in fact, highly respected by the men who had hired them and worked alongside them. And they were certainly a force to be reckoned with by their enemies. ■



Ishi-jo, wife of Oboshi Yoshio. She was an Onna-bugeisha, a type of female warrior belonging to the Japanese nobility.



Shinto priestess walking down the stairs of an old shrine in Kyoto.



Men would rarely suspect their concubines or pretty mistresses.



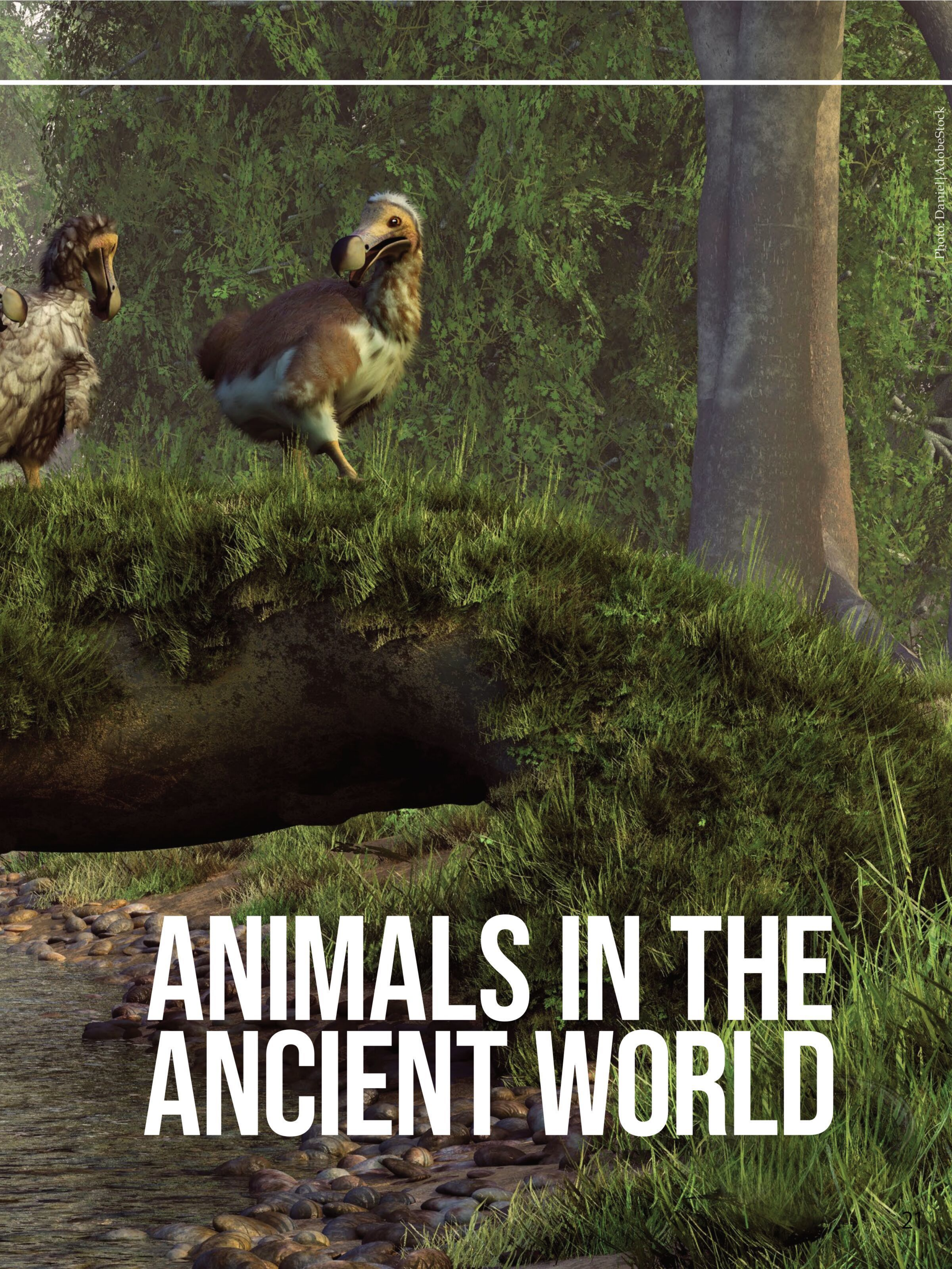


Muyil, Mexico

The Maya site of Muyil, also known as Chunyaxche, is located in the Sian Ka'an Biosphere Preserve, along the eastern coast of the Yucatan Peninsula. The Castillo is a very impressive five-tiered pyramid measuring over 59 feet tall and is crowned by a small temple. A *sacbe* (raised white stone road) leads from the Castillo to the nearby lagoon. The site was a major maritime trading port during the Early Classic Period (300-600 AD) through the Post Classic Period (900-1100 AD) with close ties to the large nearby site of Coba.

Spotlight





ANIMALS IN THE ANCIENT WORLD

Archaeozoology at Mapum



Mapungubwe

Let the Bones Speak

|| By Dr. Annie R Antonites

Ever since its creation, mankind has had an interdependent relationship with the animal kingdom. Mapungubwe (circa 1220 to 1290 AD) on the northern border of South Africa, is an Iron Age settlement and can probably be viewed as the first city of the southern-African region. Mapungubwe is famous for its treasure of golden artifacts, but an aspect of the site which is often overlooked is its rich assemblage of animal deposits, of particular value to archaeozoologists.

Archaeozoology is the study of faunal remains at archaeological sites, an exposé of the relationship between ancient people and animals. Topics regularly researched by archaeozoologists include: the ways animals were consumed as food - as meat, bone

marrow or animal fat; which animal parts had medicinal value; how parts of animals were used as clothing, for example fur and leather; bones used as weapons such as arrows or hides used as shields; animal materials used in everyday utensils such as needles, knives, bowls, and horns as drinking vessels; which parts of animals were used for adornment such as feathers, beads, ivory combs, or masks; and the use of animal materials to create musical instruments, such as bone whistles. Animals also had, and still have, a spiritual and symbolic meaning to humans, for instance digesting the heart of a predator may strengthen a warrior's valor or wearing a leopard skin identifies a person as royalty. Some animals feature in ritual burial sites and diviners use animal bones as divination tools.



THE KINGDOM OF MAPUNGUBWE

The Kingdom of Mapungubwe consisted of people of eastern Botswana, western Zimbabwe and northern South Africa. The name 'Mapungubwe', may have been derived from an animal legend, although which animal is debatable. It may refer to a jackal or even a bateleur, depending on the language. It either means 'Place where the jackal eats', or 'Rocks of the bateleur eagle'. Other meanings may be 'Place of Wisdom' or 'The place where the rock turns into liquid'. The world-famous golden rhino figurine linked to this site has been associated with a black rhino, which featured as a leadership symbol in this class-based society.

The greater Mapungubwe site can be divided into the Mapungubwe Hill, the settlement of a prosperous community and their immediate predecessors who occupied the adjacent site known as 'K2'. During the 11th century, the inhabitants of K2 supported themselves by means

of animal husbandry, hunting, and trapping. Elephants roamed the area and people at K2 traded in animal products such as ivory and hides, in exchange for glass beads from Asia. By the early 13th century K2 was abandoned, but the lucrative trade was continued by the community who had relocated to the Mapungubwe Hill and surroundings. The elite lived on the Hill and the commoners below, indicating a definite class-distinction. By that time, trade had expanded to include metals such as copper and tin and of course, gold, but the ordinary man measured his wealth in cattle.

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Panoramic view in Mapungubwe
National park, South Africa



Mapungubwe
either means 'Place
where the jackal
eats', or 'Rocks of
the bateleur eagle'.



Gold bovine figure from Mapungubwe.



©University of Pretoria

The iconic gold rhinoceros recovered from graves on Mapungubwe Hill.



Domesticated cattle, sheep, and goat bones make up most of the artifacts.

ARCHAEOZOOLOGISTS AT WORK

Worked bone objects were first discovered during excavations conducted in the early 1930s at the site and continued for decades thereafter. A major part of the bone material was obtained from large mammals, while bird and small bovid bones were also discovered. Identifying all of the specific animals was an impossible task, due to the final products being modified to such an extent that very few diagnostic features remained. However, it is safe to assume that domesticated cattle, sheep, and goat bones make up most of the artifacts. Zebra, wildebeest, impala,

duiker, giraffe, and even hippopotami also roamed the plains of the Limpopo Valley and objects manufactured from their bones were excavated at K2 and Mapungubwe. Elephant ivory was a valuable trade commodity, but it is not known whether their bones were reworked into objects.

The science of use-trace analysis, which includes fracture mechanics, tribology, and residue analysis, is an innovative field in archaeology and in South Africa bone objects are described in terms of microscopic use-trace findings.

ARROWS TO DEFEND THE AFFLUENT ELITE

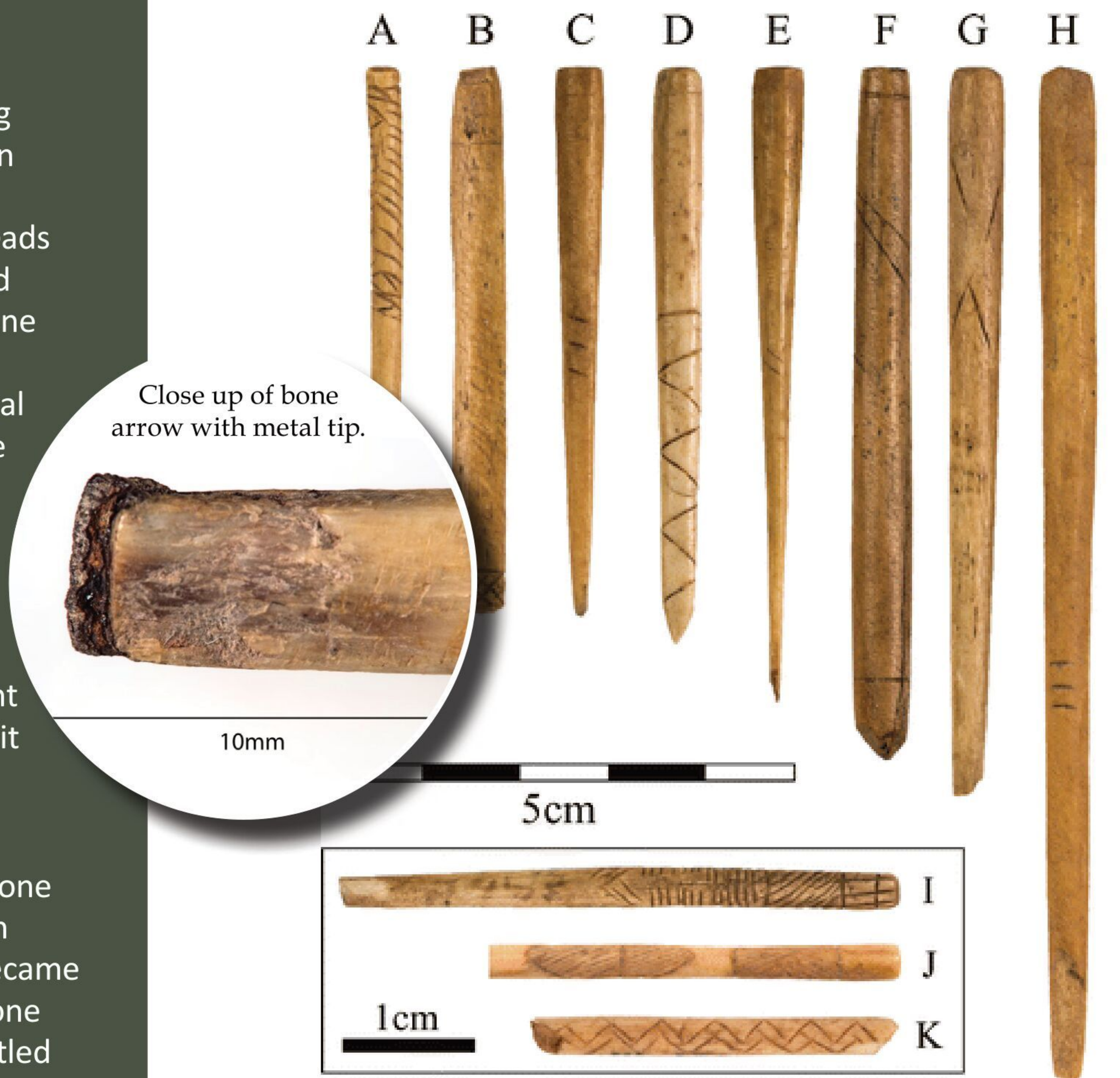
Arrowheads can be divided according to size, general shape, and shape of the tip. They are further classified as formal or expedient. At K2 and Mapungubwe, tips were shaped in different ways – either squared or pointed. Some of the squared tips were split; use-trace analysis revealed iron oxide in the split, indicating that there was a metal tip. These tips were probably secured with sinew (fibrous tissue from an animal) or a plant fiber. Some damaged arrow points clearly show that they had been recycled.

The combination of bone and metal was a surprising feature, as it is unknown in the southern African Iron Age period. Long arrowheads could have been produced from giraffe bones. The bone would have been grooved and snapped into individual pieces. Next it would have been chipped at, to form the long arrow shape and further smoothed against an abrasive surface, to create the rounded symmetric point. The point could be sharpened or split to insert a metal tip.

Expedient objects include modified or unmodified bone fragments used to such an extent that the surface became polished or worn. Limb bone shafts were split and whittled into shape by use of a sharp metal or stone blade. Irregular ends were ground smooth. By the time of the community settling at Mapungubwe, the process had been refined, as these object surfaces were smoother than those found at K2. Some of these were decorated with paint and incisions.

Since iron was initially a rare commodity, arrowheads were made of bone with small metal tips, as opposed to complete metal tips. However, the more affluent society living on the Mapungubwe Hill did make use of metal arrowheads, a clear indication of their elevated status.

A large cache of bone arrowheads was excavated at K2, predating the occupation of Mapungubwe Hill. Use-trace analysis indicates the shaft of



A selection of decorated objects from Mapungubwe. A: pin-like object; B-H: arrowheads and link-shaft; I-K: pin-like objects.

the arrows probably consisted of common reeds, which grow on the banks of the nearby Limpopo River. The reed shafts decayed over time, leaving only their silica traces. There are also signs of an ocher-based compound that was used as an adhesive to fix the arrow point to the shaft. Few of the arrowheads actually exhibited decorative aspects, either by incision or pigmentation. Black and red pigmentations originating from amorphous carbon and red hematite were used.

Arrows are usually associated with hunting purposes. However, archaeozoologists concluded that cattle herds, for domesticated household purposes, were of such numbers that the population

did not depend on hunting as a primary food supply. So why did a predominantly farming community need so many arrows, if they were not hunting? The large number of bone arrows, discovered in the upper layers of deposits on the Hill, suggests a different use: the affluent elite living on Mapungubwe Hill required protection. A weapon stockpile was amassed to counter some perceived threat. Another deposit of bone arrows was found in the commoner area below the Hill, perhaps indicating a first line of defense. It is clear that these arrows were mass produced and not on an ad hoc basis. Whether these arrows were in preparation for a real battle or just a show of force is yet to be determined.

SKINNING AND SEWING HIDES

In times of peace, though, ordinary people kept themselves busy by producing household crafts and stock for trade. Use-trace analyses of animal material provides insight into these activities. Opening a window into the everyday life of commoners, the presence of bone needles and awls point to a craft industry of leather workings, basketry, and matting. Baskets were used for storage, but also for transport and containers, while mats were slept on. Use-trace analyses of the bone needles indicate different types of plants, such as grasses, creepers, and bark fibers were utilized. The texture of baskets may differ from heavy-duty to

finely woven, which would each require a different plant material and of course a different size of needle. Split ribs and limb bones were used to make needles. Microscopic gold flakes were identified on one of the perforated needles, but its purpose has not yet been identified.

Bone implements were also employed in scraping flesh from animal skins. Not only were the hides of some animals traded, but animal skin was turned into leather products. Interestingly, there was an abundance of expediently made points and worked fragments from animal ribs found at K2 as opposed to at Mapungubwe Hill, which could indicate skin trading was a major focus during the earlier K2 period.

However, during the collection of such large quantities of material, modified bones may have been missed, which may explain the lesser quantity at Mapungubwe Hill.

Pin-like bone objects resemble arrowheads, but on a much smaller scale. These objects were elaborately decorated and exhibited more detailed workmanship, leading archaeologists to initially believe that they were used as hair and ear adornments. Use-trace analysis however revealed these objects had contact with soft material, such as hides, and their utilitarian function was probably rather as a perforator or awl. Some of them were consistent with contact with a scalp, therefore they could be hair ornaments. Others showed microscopic traces of being in contact with wood.

Use-trace analyses provide microscopic evidence, not visible to the naked eye, guiding archaeozoologists to come to much clearer conclusions as to the origins, production, and function of animal bone material, excavated at these sites. It spotlights mankind's ingenious transformation of animal products into items of warfare, clothing, and seemingly ordinary utensils and decorations. ■

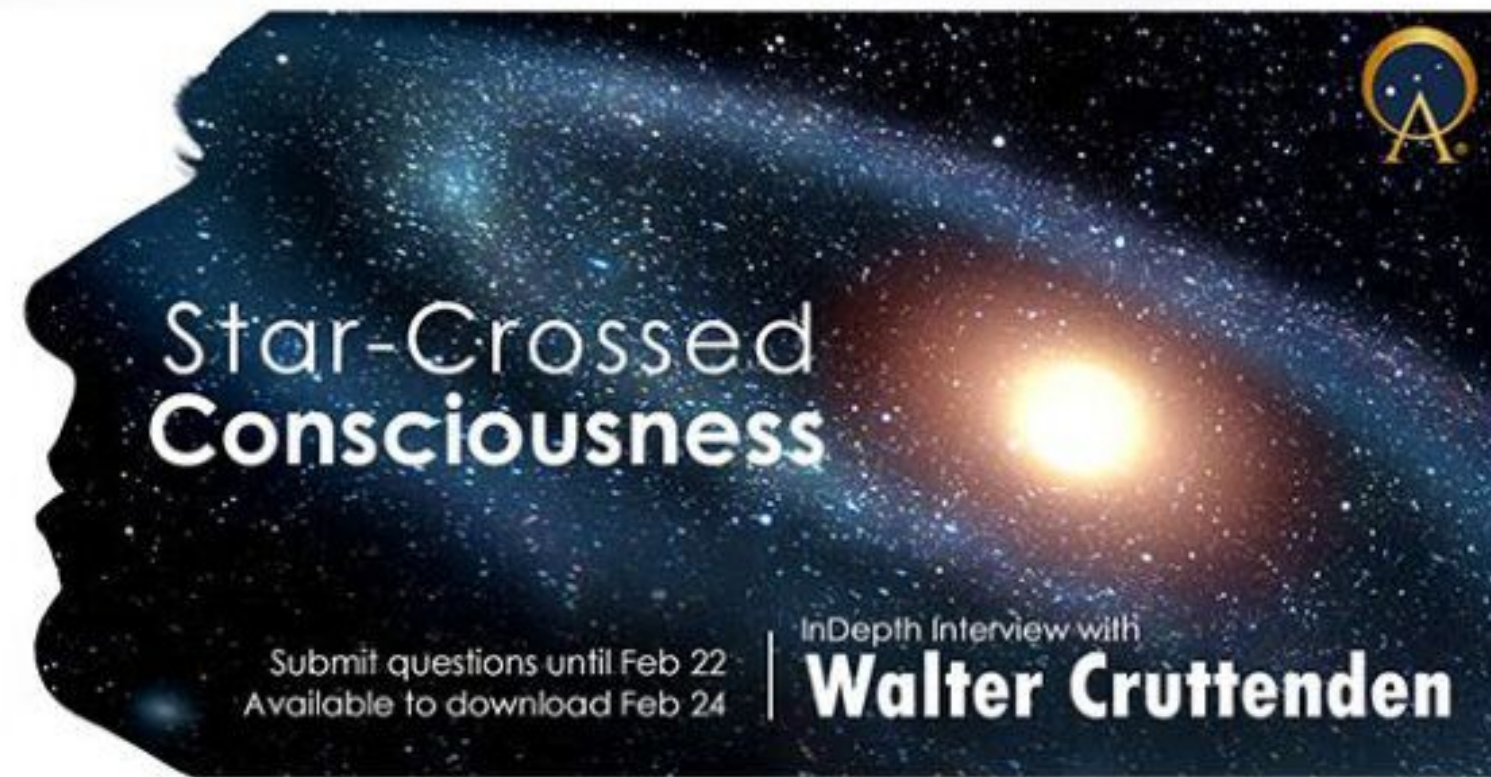
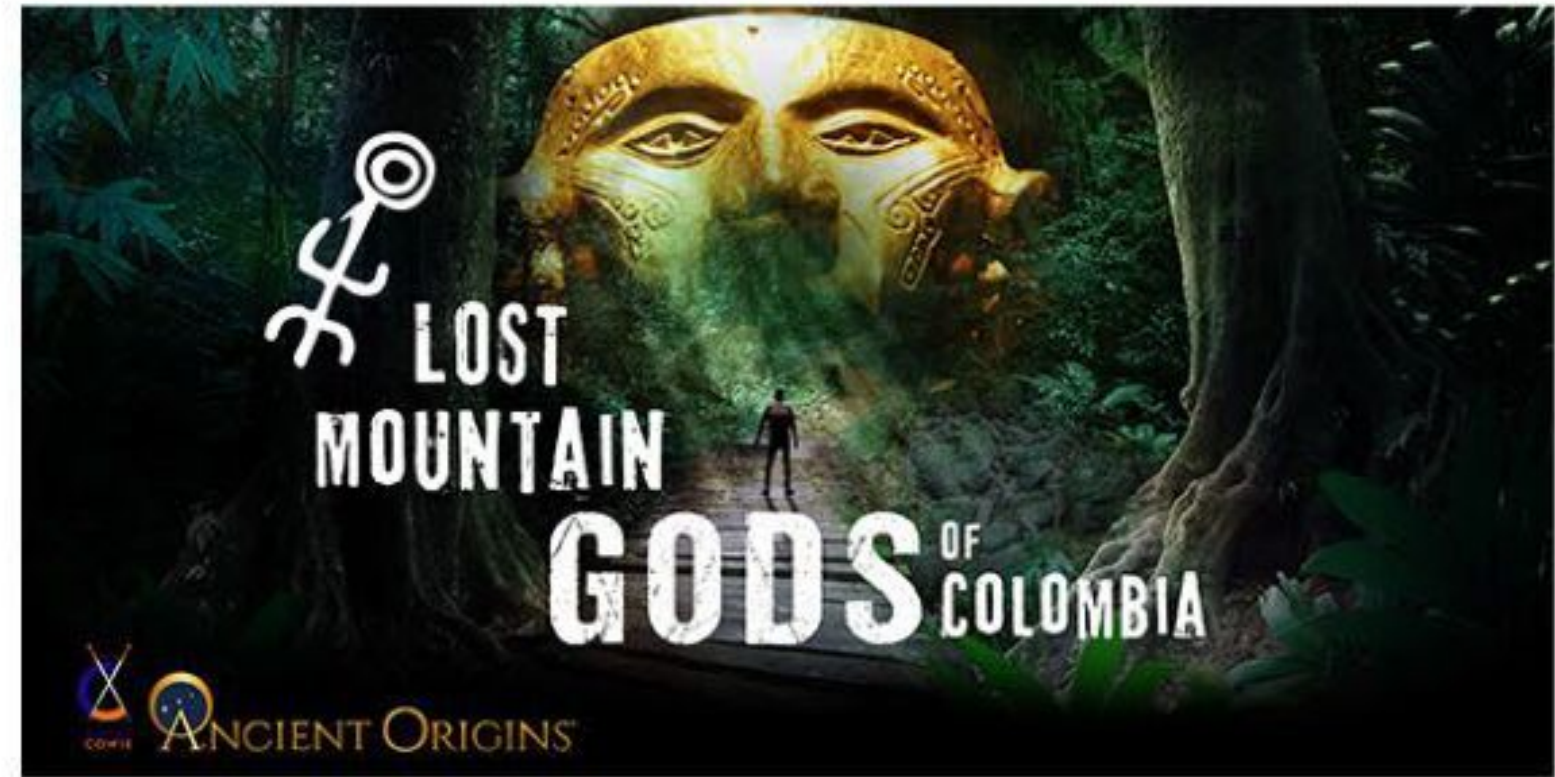
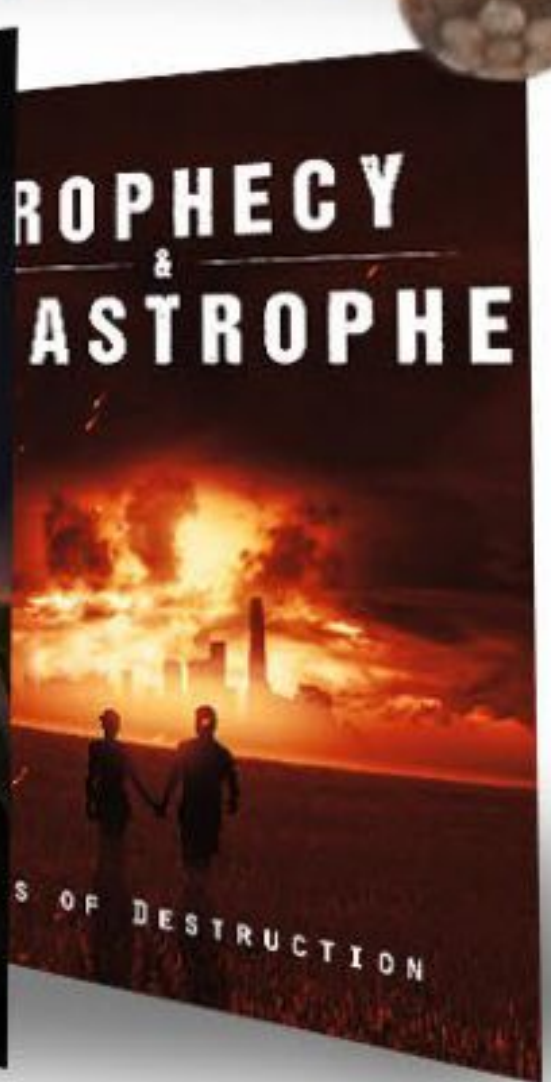
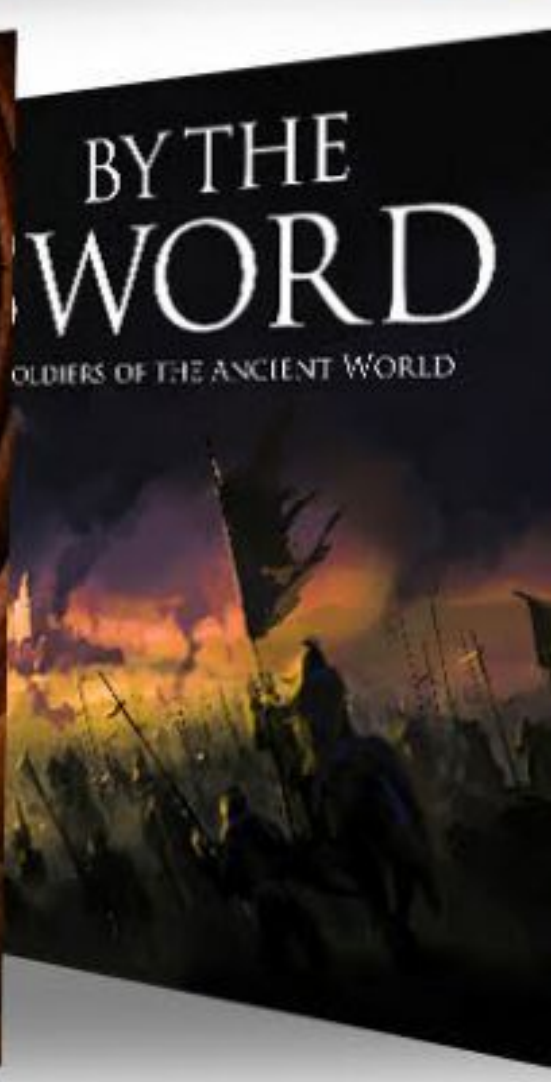
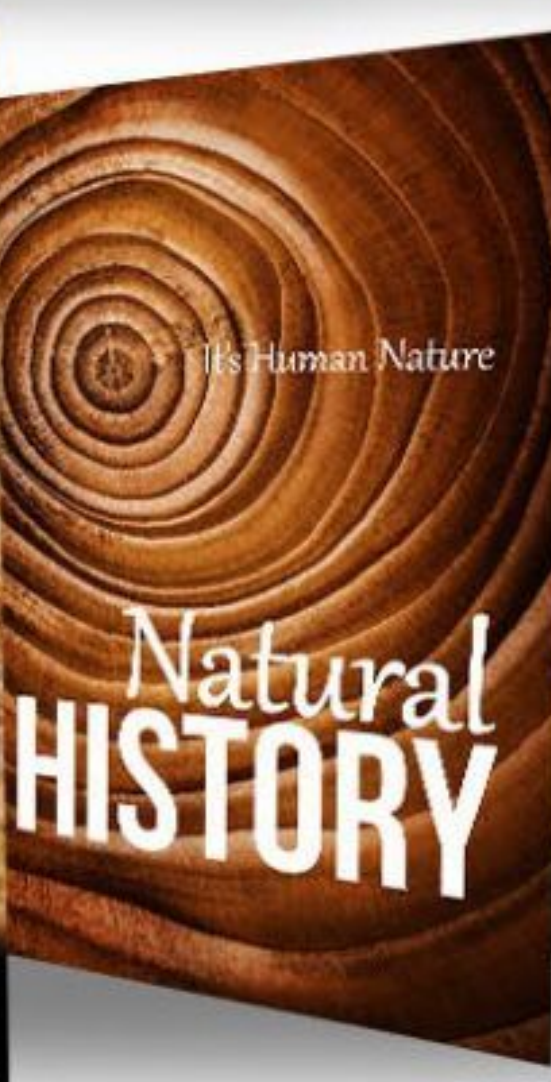
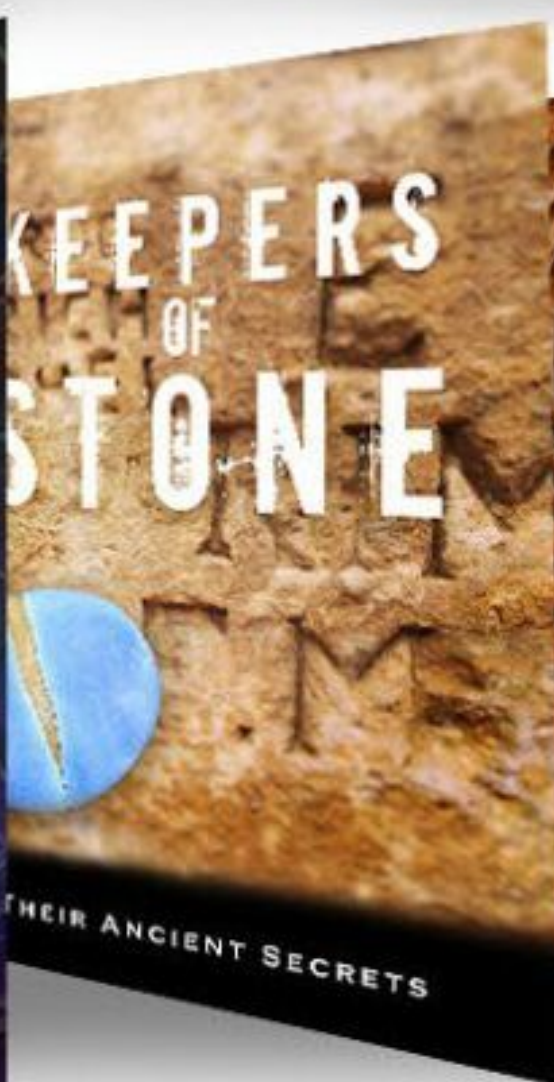
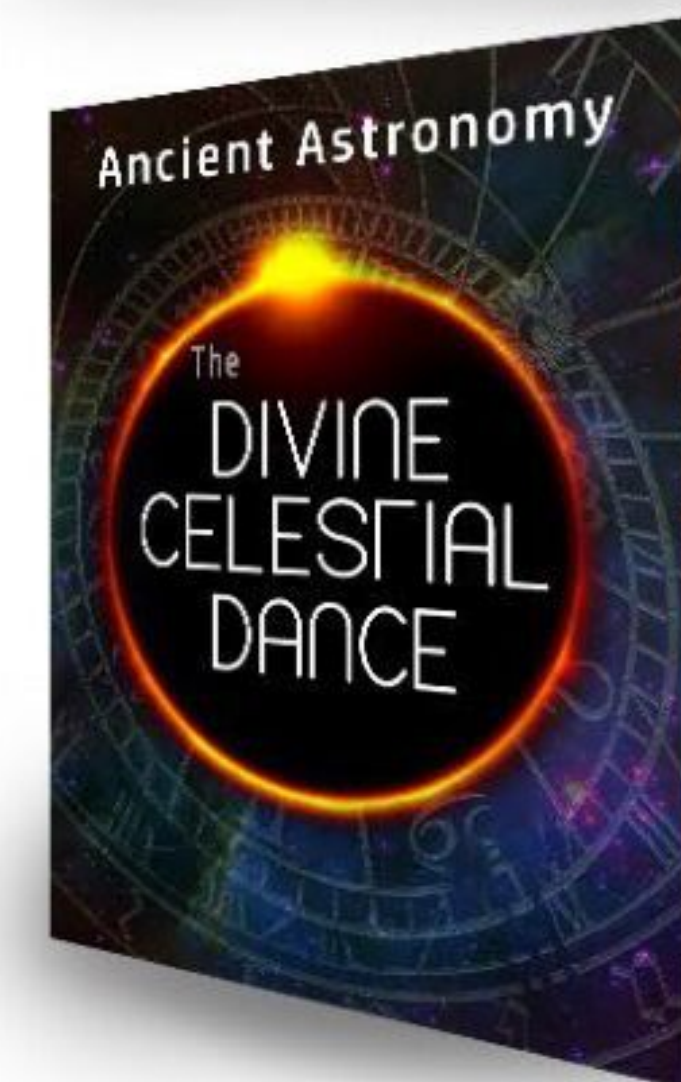
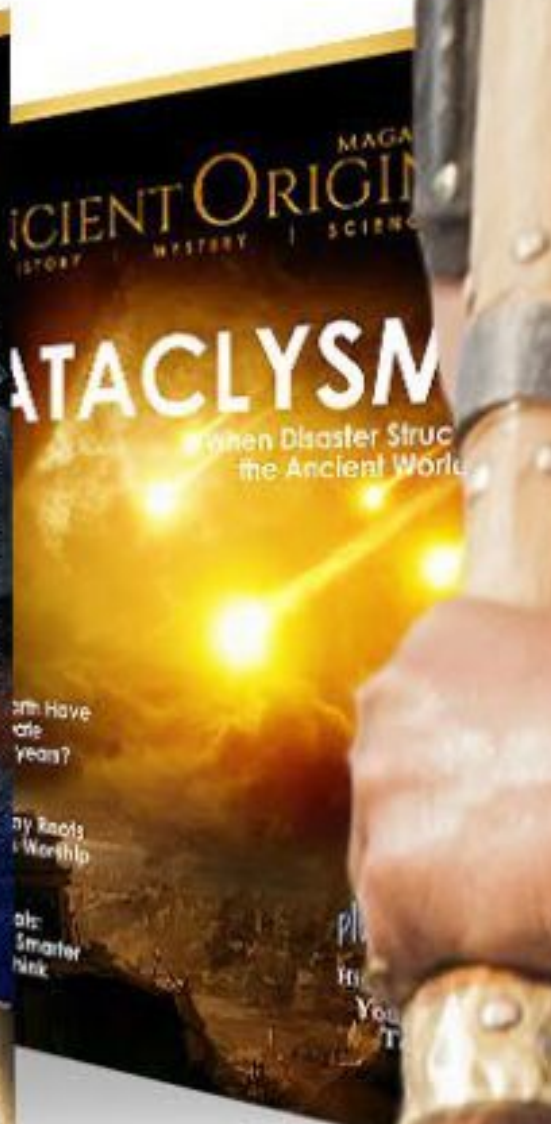
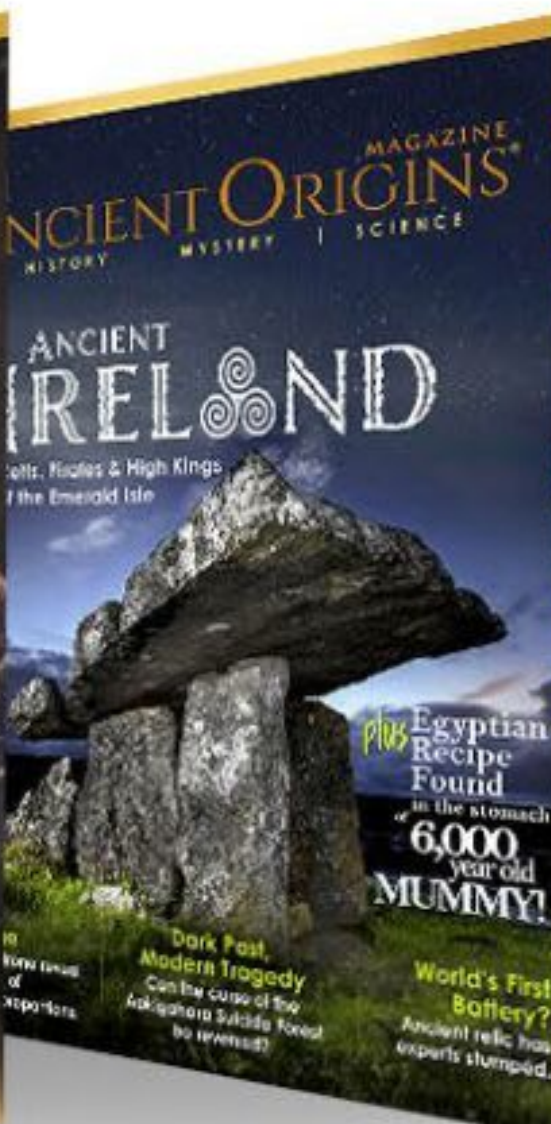
Close up of bone needle from Mapungubwe Hill.
©University of Pretoria

Interesting rock formation in Mapungubwe National Park, South Africa.



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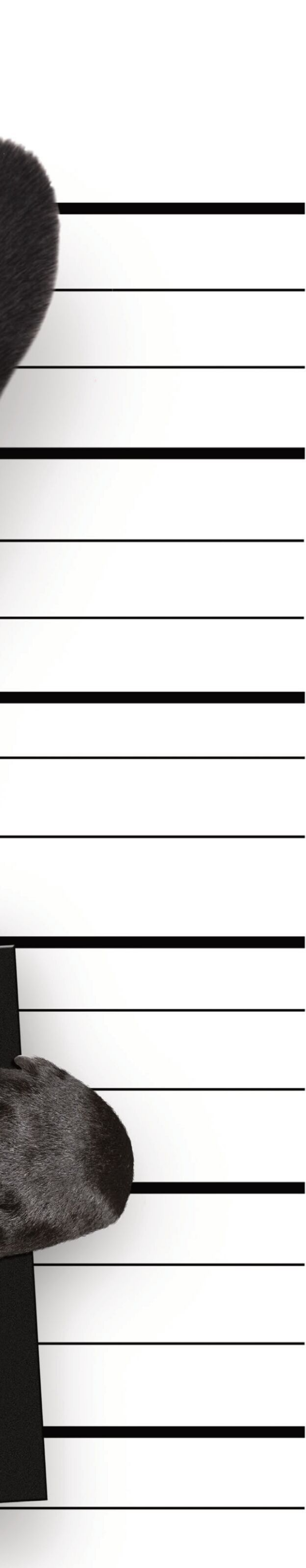
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guilty

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Strange, But Serious, Medieval Animal Trials Were No Kangaroo Court!

|| BY WU MINGREN

ONE of the more unusual aspects of the Medieval world was that animals could be put on trial like human beings. Yes, there was such a thing as legal animal trials! While the veracity of many Medieval animal trials is difficult to ascertain, it is without doubt that some of them did in fact take place. All kinds of animals could be brought before a secular or ecclesiastical court, either as individuals or as groups, including rats, pigs, roosters, monkeys, and even dolphins!

It appears that a wide range of “crimes” could be, and were, committed by animals, including murder, bestiality, and damage of crops or property. If found guilty, larger animals would be punished with execution or exile, whereas smaller animals could be excommunicated or denounced by a church tribunal. One of the more detailed examinations of this strange subject is Edmund P. Evans’

The Criminal Prosecution and Capital Punishment of Animals, which was published in 1906.

According to Evans, the trial and punishment of animals did not occur uniquely in Europe during the Middle Ages, as this practice is recorded in other civilizations as well. As an example, Evans states that the Romans would crucify a dog as part of the celebrations commemorating the anniversary of the preservation of the Capitol

from the night-attack of the Gauls, which is traditionally regarded to have occurred in 390 BC.

After defeating the Romans at the Battle of the Allia, the Gauls proceeded to sack Rome. The Capitoline Hill, however, was one of the places

that withstood the invaders, so the Gauls decided to put it under siege. Eventually, the Gauls found a way to ascend the hill and were detected neither by the guards nor their dogs. Fortunately, the Roman

A wide range of “crimes” could be, and were, committed by animals, including murder, bestiality, and damage of crops or property.

defenders were alerted to the movement of the Gauls by the sacred geese of the goddess Juno and were able to repel the Gauls. While the geese were hailed as heroes, the dogs were punished for neglecting their duty.

It's curious to mention that it wasn't only animals that were tried and punished. In the ancient world inanimate objects could be taken to court as well! Evans cites the trial and punishment of a statue in Athens as an example. This statue belonged to Nikon of Thasos, a famous athlete, and was set up by the Athenians in his honor. Unfortunately, rivals who were jealous of his success attacked the statue and knocked it off its pedestal. In the skirmish, one of the assailants was crushed to death under the statue. According to Athenian law, weapons and all other objects that caused the death of a person were to be publicly condemned and thrown beyond the city's boundaries. Thus, the statue was brought before a tribunal, found guilty, and sentenced to be thrown into the sea.

In the ancient world
inanimate objects
could be taken to
court as well!

FACT OR FICTION? ACCOUNTS OF MEDIEVAL ANIMAL TRIALS

While animal trials did take place during the Middle Ages, it is unclear as to how many documented accounts are genuine. Sara McDougall, associate professor at the John Jay College of Criminal Justice in New York City points out that the 19th century scholars who recorded these trials do not provide enough detail about their sources. In other words, it is difficult for scholars today to trace the origins of these stories and to determine their veracity.

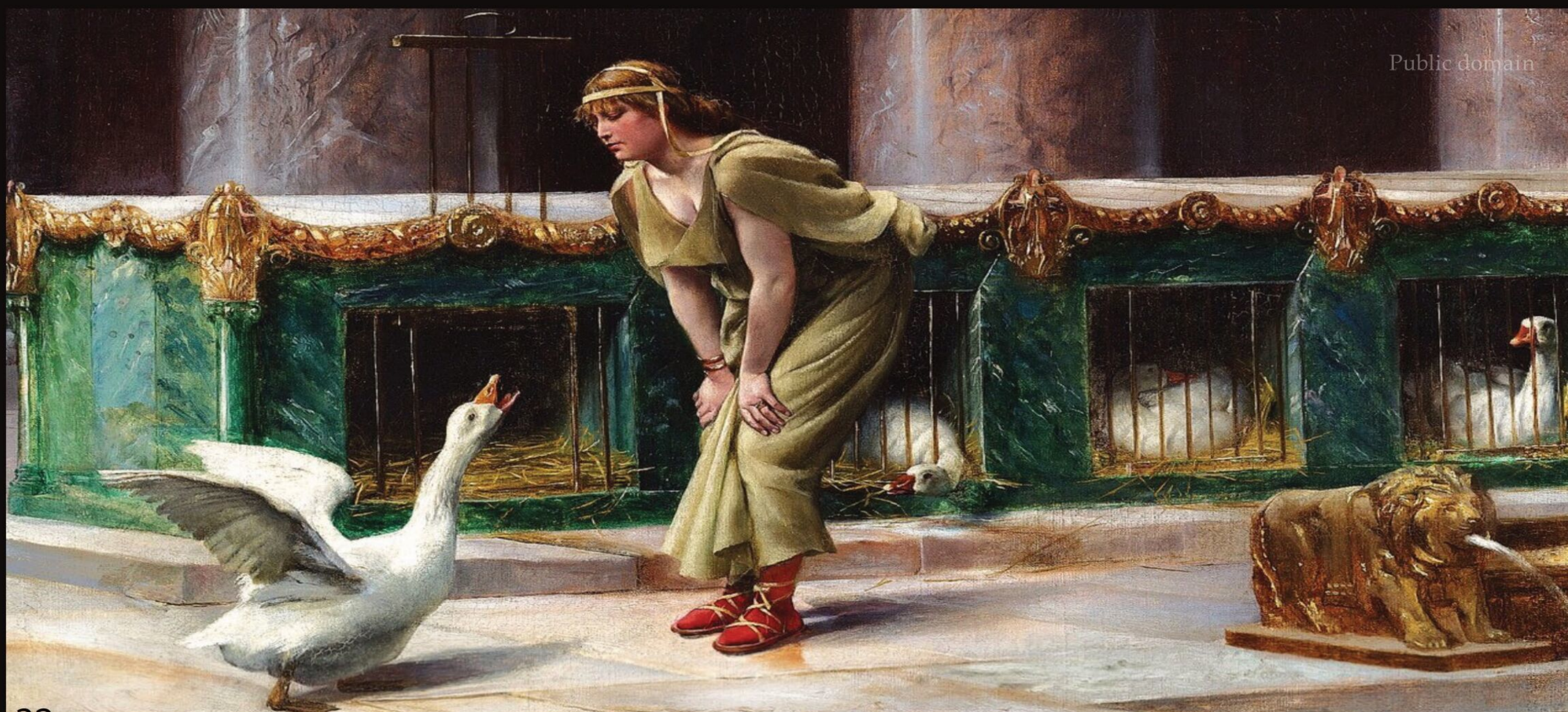
Nevertheless, Medieval accounts of animal trials do exist, although McDougall states that a lot of them were either made up or written in an attempt to keep students from falling asleep. McDougall also notes that one

of the most famous animal trials was invented in order to defame the lawyer who had allegedly defended the animals, in this case, a bunch of rats.

The earliest known documentation of a Medieval animal trial dates back to 1266. The trial took place in Fontenay-aux-Roses, not far from the French capital Paris, and involved a pig accused of committing infanticide. The pig on trial was suspected of devouring a child and was therefore brought before a court. The trial was overseen by the monks of St Genevieve and the animal was found guilty, after which it was sentenced to burn at stake. It seems that during the Middle Ages it was illegal to execute anyone (or anything for that matter) without a trial and therefore animals suspected of committing serious crimes were put on trial, before being executed.

EXPLANATIONS FOR ANIMAL TRIALS

This explanation, however, is only one of many that have been suggested to make sense of this strange phenomenon. Over the



Public domain



The 1838 trial of Bill Burns.

years, other scholars have put forward their own hypotheses in an attempt to explain the existence of these animal trials. One explanation, for instance, is that some animals were believed to have moral agency and therefore, like human beings, could be held responsible for the crimes they committed.

Thus, when an animal was brought before a court, it was treated as if it were a human being. The strictest legal procedures were adhered to so as to endow the whole affair with a somber atmosphere. In some cases, the animals were dressed up in human clothing when they were brought to court. This is seen, for



In one trial from 1457, a sow and her piglets were accused of murdering a child. The mother is reported to have been found guilty, while her piglets were acquitted

instance, in the execution of a pig convicted of infanticide in 1386. Before the execution the pig was dressed in a waistcoat, gloves, and pair of drawers. Additionally, a human mask was placed on her head.

Many other hypotheses have been put forward to explain the occurrence of animal trials. One of these, for instance, suggests that Medieval Europeans believed authority over the animal kingdom was conferred on mankind by God and that putting animals on trial was a way of asserting this authority. Alternatively, it has been proposed that during the 12th and 13th centuries the development of the legal system led to an excess of courts and lawyers. As there was not enough work to go around for everyone, it was decided that animals suspected of committing crimes should also be tried in an effort to create more job opportunities.

BARTHOLOMEW CHASSENÉE AND HIS RATTY DEFENSE

Yet another hypothesis states that Medieval lawyers saw the animal trials as an opportunity to show off their mental dexterity as they had the chance to come up with ingenious arguments to defend their clients. This is seen in the case of Bartholomew Chassenée, a French jurist who lived during the 15th to 16th century. Chassenée was the defense lawyer for a bunch of rats charged with eating and destroying the local barley. On the day of the trial the rats failed to turn up as expected and Chassenée came up with cunning arguments to excuse them.

He argued that since the rats were moving from one village to another they probably did not



A basilisk (1671). According to Medieval belief, an egg laid by a rooster would hatch either into a basilisk or a cockatrice.

receive the summons. Even if they did receive the summons, he conjectured, they may have been afraid for risk of being attacked by cats on their way to court. The lawyer elaborated on this point and concluded that his clients could legally refuse to appear in court since their safety could not be guaranteed. The judges were finally forced to drop the case, as they could neither refute Chassenée's argument nor persuade the villagers to keep their cats indoors.

OTHER CURIOUS CASES CHARGED AGAINST ANIMALS

Based on the documented evidence, the pig was the most commonly tried animal during the Middle Ages. According to Evans, this was mainly due to the fact that pigs were given greater freedom to roam around the streets than other animals,

and because of their large numbers. Nevertheless, other animals could be tried for various offences.

For instance, In 1474 a court in the Swiss city of Basel sentenced a rooster to burn at the stake "for the heinous and unnatural crime of laying an egg." According to Medieval belief, an egg laid by a rooster would hatch either into a basilisk or a cockatrice, both of which were extremely dangerous creatures. While these monsters were believed to have existed, no

one expected to come across a rooster that laid eggs, thus making the 1474 trial in Basel an exceptional one.

In 1474 a court in the Swiss city of Basel sentenced a rooster to burn at the stake "for the heinous and unnatural crime of laying an egg."

Other animals that were tried during the Middle Ages include bulls, dogs, and goats. One of the most curious animal trials recorded by Evans involved dolphins. Apart from stating that the

animals were tried and executed in Marseilles in 1596, Evans provides



Execution of a Sow. Project Gutenberg.

no further details regarding the case. Although animals were commonly brought before a court on charges of murder or injuring humans, other offences could be committed by them as well. The rooster of Basel, for instance, was tried for participating in demonic activities. Bestiality was another offense for which an animal could be brought to court.

While both parties, i.e. the human and animal, could be sentenced to death, the latter was given the opportunity to be spared punishment as it could be argued that the animal did not consent and was therefore not at fault. Such was the case of Jacques Ferron, a Frenchman caught engaging in bestiality with a female donkey in Vanves in 1750. Both parties were tried, and the prosecution asked for the death sentence of both Ferron and the donkey. While Ferron was sentenced to death (by burning at the stake), the donkey was set free on the basis that she had not participated in Ferron's crime on her own free will. Moreover, the parish priest had testified to the donkey's good character, saying that he had known her for four years, that she was a virtuous and well-behaved animal and that she had never given occasion of scandal to anyone.

DIFFERENT COURTS FOR DIFFERENT BEASTS

The trial of animals was often carried out by the secular courts which had the power to sentence them to death. The ecclesiastical courts were also granted authority to try animals, though animals of a different sort were brought before its judges, made up of bishops and other Church officials. These clergymen usually dealt with cases involving vermin, such as rodents

and insects. This was due to the fact that unlike pigs or other animals tried by the secular courts it was impossible, or at least extremely difficult, for the civil authorities to seize and bring these animals before a court. They were therefore placed under the jurisdiction of the Church.

Towns or districts plagued by vermin could bring the perpetrators of the “crime” before an ecclesiastical court. An investigation would be launched and if sufficient grounds for bringing the pests to court was found, an advocate would be appointed to defend them. A summons would then be issued by the court which would be read by a court official at places where the vermin were thought to frequent. The pests were given three opportunities to appear in court and to plead their case. As one may expect, the vermin rarely, if ever, turned up at court and therefore lost

their case. The animals would then be given a certain amount of time to leave the area.

If the vermin failed to do so they would be excommunicated.

The trial of vermin by ecclesiastical courts has led to the suggestion that animal trials were carried out as a means of helping the community to cope during times of crisis. Plagues, destruction of crops, and other problems may be blamed on vermin and the animals could be brought before a court. While the trials almost certainly did not solve the problems, they gave the people an impression that the authorities were doing what they could to maintain law and order and therefore gave them some sense of assurance.

When compared to kinds of pesticides

available during that era, trying vermin and punishing them may not have been so far-fetched after all. Some ways of dealing with pests during that time included sprinkling weasel

ash over a field to drive away mice, castrating a mouse before releasing it so as to scare away other mice from the area, and driving moles away by planting castor oil plants in fields plagued by these creatures.



Animal trials included rats charged with eating and destroying barley.

The end of the Medieval period did not bring about the end of animal trials. One example of an animal trial beyond the Middle Ages is that of the Hartlepool Monkey, which allegedly occurred during the Napoleonic Wars. Legend has it that a French ship was wrecked off the coast of Hartlepool, in County Durham, England. The only survivor was a monkey, who was the ship’s mascot, who the people of Hartlepool mistook for a French spy since its chattering was thought to be the French language. The shipwrecked monkey was therefore put on trial, found guilty of espionage, and hung on the beach. While some believe that the hanging of the Hartlepool Monkey did occur, others are less sure about it. In any case, the story became attached to Hartlepool and has stuck to the city ever since. Locals to this day are often nicknamed “monkey hangers”. ■

The shipwrecked monkey was therefore put on trial, found guilty of espionage, and hung on the beach.

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The Symbolic Spider

that Wove its Way through History



|| By Liz Leafloor



The spider is a powerful and ancient symbol which has been used in different cultures around the world to elicit a wide range of emotions including fear, disgust, panic, and sometimes curiosity and appreciation. This broad spectrum of impressions has influenced origin myths, legends, art, literature, music, architecture, and technology throughout history.

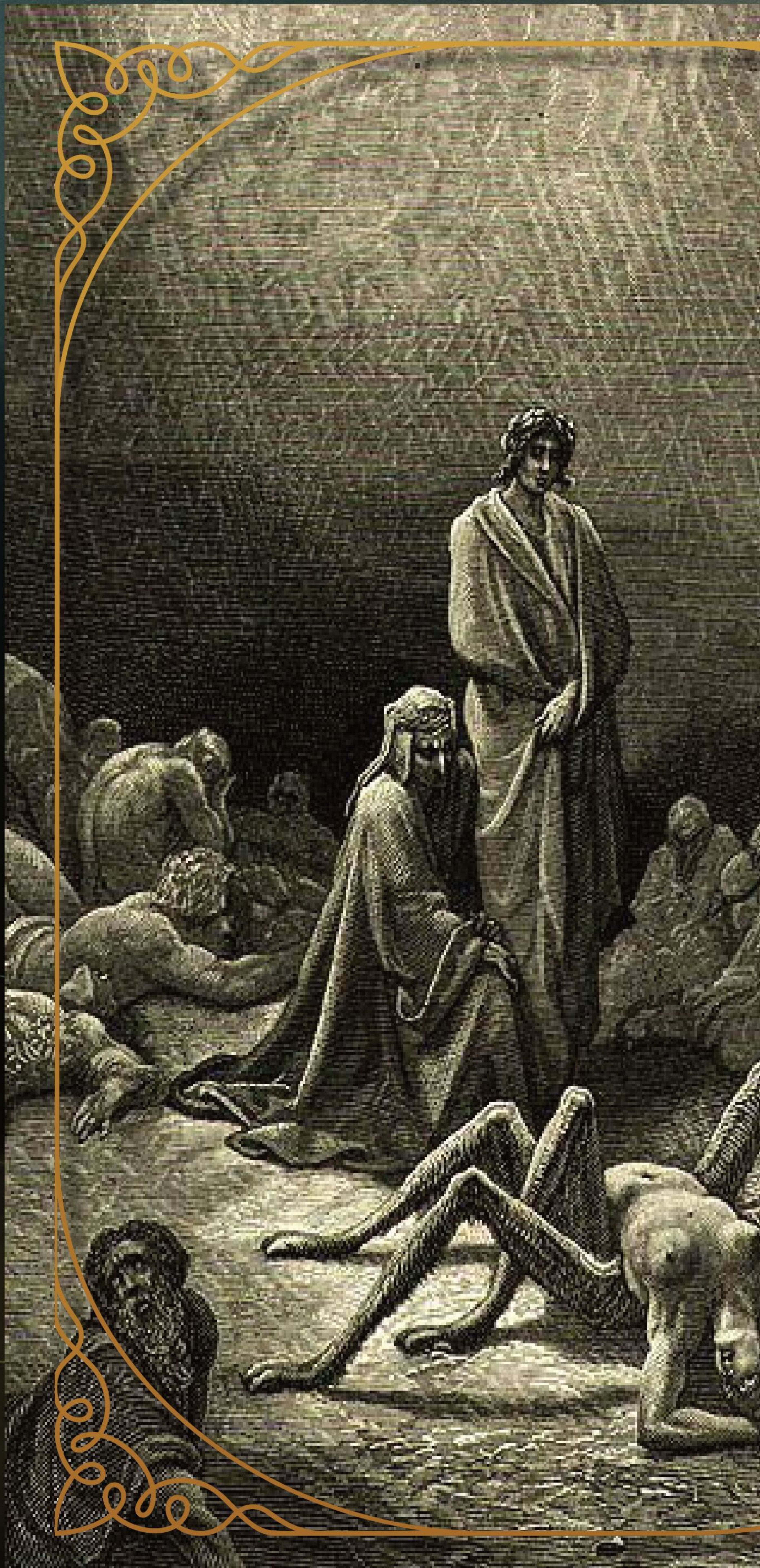
CERTAINLY an enigmatic symbol, the spider has been used for different purposes and varied intentions in different civilizations. Arachnids and their webs embody many traits and interpretations, including resourcefulness, creation and destruction, cunning, deception, intrigue, the feminine, wisdom, fortune, patience, and even death.

ARROGANT ARACHNE THE WEAVER

In ancient Greek legend, the world's first spider was born from the pride of a woman. The mortal Arachne was gifted in the art of weaving fine cloth and tapestries, and studied under the goddess Athena, herself a master at weaving and pottery. Arachne's work was so beautiful, and her talent so great, that word of her weaving spread far and wide.

Eventually, pride and arrogance lead Arachne to boast that her work was even better than Athena's. In a contest to determine who was the better artist – the mortal or the goddess – Arachne wove a tapestry depicting the gods in a bad light, detailing their debauchery and foolishness. The goddess Athena was furious and, in a rage, destroyed Arachne's work.

Horried and ashamed to realize where her hubris had taken her, Arachne hanged herself. Athena, feeling that the mortal had learned the error of challenging the gods, turned the hanging rope into web and Arachne into a spider, so she might weave beautiful creations for all time. This is the origin of the word arachnid; a term we use for spiders to this day.



Arachne depicted as a half-spider half-human in Dante's Purgatorio, by Gustave Doré.

THE SPIDER AS A CREATOR AND DESTROYER

Being crafty and industrious weavers of webs is only one trait for which spiders have been symbolically exploited across the ages. Spiders and webs have been featured in a variety of societies and have meant different things to each and every one of them. In many cultures, spiders stand as the creators of our universe and world, while in others they serve as agents of destruction.

In ancient India it was believed that a large spider wove the web that is now our universe. Thereafter she sat at the center of the web, controlling all existence via her strings. Legend has it that one day she will devour the universe and spin another in its place.

Meanwhile, Egyptian mythology tells of the goddess Neith - a spinner and weaver of destiny - and associates her with the spider. She is often depicted with a weaving shuttle in her hand, or a bow and arrows, demonstrating her hunting abilities.

The spider is a trickster god in West African stories, personifying

the creation deity Anansi. Associated with storytelling and wisdom, in this region of the world the spider causes mischief to get the upper hand in dealings with others. The retelling of these "spider tales" imparts moral lessons through the generations.

Moving across the world to Australia, rock art and bark paintings reveal that the indigenous cultures created spider symbols. Spiders in their webs are linked with a sacred rock and ceremony for the Rembarrnga people in central Arnhem Land, while several regional clans use spider totems in rituals.

North American indigenous cultures have often portrayed spiders as creators, helpers, and wisdom keepers. In the Hopi creation myth, Spider Woman is the goddess of the earth. She, together with other gods, formed the first man and

woman out of clay. Lakota lore includes a trickster spider, while the Navajo connect Spider Grandmother and the weaving of webs with the creation of the world.



Statuette of the goddess Neith.
Public Domain.

SPIDERS AS A GOOD OMEN

Spiders, contrary to their sometimes fearsome or creepy physical appearances, are not always portrayed as dangerous creatures or destructive emblems. In many traditions, the spider is a good omen and a helpful savior. Ancient Chinese folk culture celebrates spiders. They are thought to bring happiness in the morning, and wealth in the evening. Spiders are lucky creatures,

In many traditions, the spider is a good omen and a helpful savior.

dubbed happy insects. The image of the spider features widely in art and literature in China, and

spider jewelry or charms are worn to bring good luck.

In Germany and Ukraine, it is tradition to include spiders and webs in Christmas tree decorations, due to the association between tinsel decorations and the spider web strands.

Spiders are also believed to have saved the lives of important leaders in many cultures. For example, the Torah tells the story of David, later the King of Israel, being pursued by King Saul's soldiers. David hid from the men in a cave and a spider helped him by building a huge web blocking the entrance. When the soldiers



arrived outside the cave they didn't bother looking inside it, assuming that no one could be there since the spider web was undisturbed.

SPIDERS IN PERUVIAN TEMPLES, ART, AND GEOGLYPHS

The ancient Moche people of northern Peru, who existed from about 100 AD to 700 AD, often included nature and spider images in their art. This was not the first Peruvian culture to use spider representations. In a Peruvian valley in 2008, researchers uncovered a forgotten adobe temple with carved spider imagery. The temple was unique in its dedication to a spider god and was created by the Cupisnique civilization who ruled the area from 1500 BC to 100 BC.

Some suggest the spider could have been a fertility symbol in the Nazca culture.

Researchers speculate the spider and web represent hunting nets, and therefore prosperity and progress. It is also suggested the spider image was a powerful political symbol. Yale University archaeologist Richard Burger has stated that "other symbolic associations for the spider god included war, hunting, power or textiles. There is an image of spider deities holding nets filled with decapitated human heads, so there was an analogy with successful warriors and claims of power."

The mysterious Nazca lines in the desert of southern Peru also contain arachnid imagery. The series of geoglyphs depict straight lines and giant creatures, and were created between 400 and 650 AD. The largest image spans over 660 feet across. One of the creatures present in the geoglyphs is a

giant, symmetrical, eight-legged spider. Some suggest the spider could have been a fertility symbol in the Nazca culture, and the senior astronomer at the Adler Planetarium and Astronomy Museum

posits that the spider is a representation of the Orion constellation. Archaeologists, mathematicians, and historians still debate the purpose of the Nazca images.



1 - Apparition of the Spider Princess in an 1887 woodblock print by Yoshitoshi.



2 -The base of the Moche Moon Pyramid (Huaca de la Luna) with a painted bas relief mural near Trujillo, Peru.



3 - Aerial view of geoglyphs near Nazca - famous Nazca Lines, Peru. The Spider figure is in the center.

4 -Grandmother Spider Woman sculpture from Hopi culture by artist Lauren Raine.

DARK DANGERS OF SNEAKY SPIDERS

Spiders cannot shake their frightening aspect, and many folktales warn of the dangerous traits associated with spiders, such as ensnaring webs, lies, and deceptions, lethal venom, silent attacks, and creeping terror. In Japan the Spider Princess, a mythological spider figure called *Jorōgumo*, is able to transform into a seductive woman who entraps travelling samurai. The Spider Princess

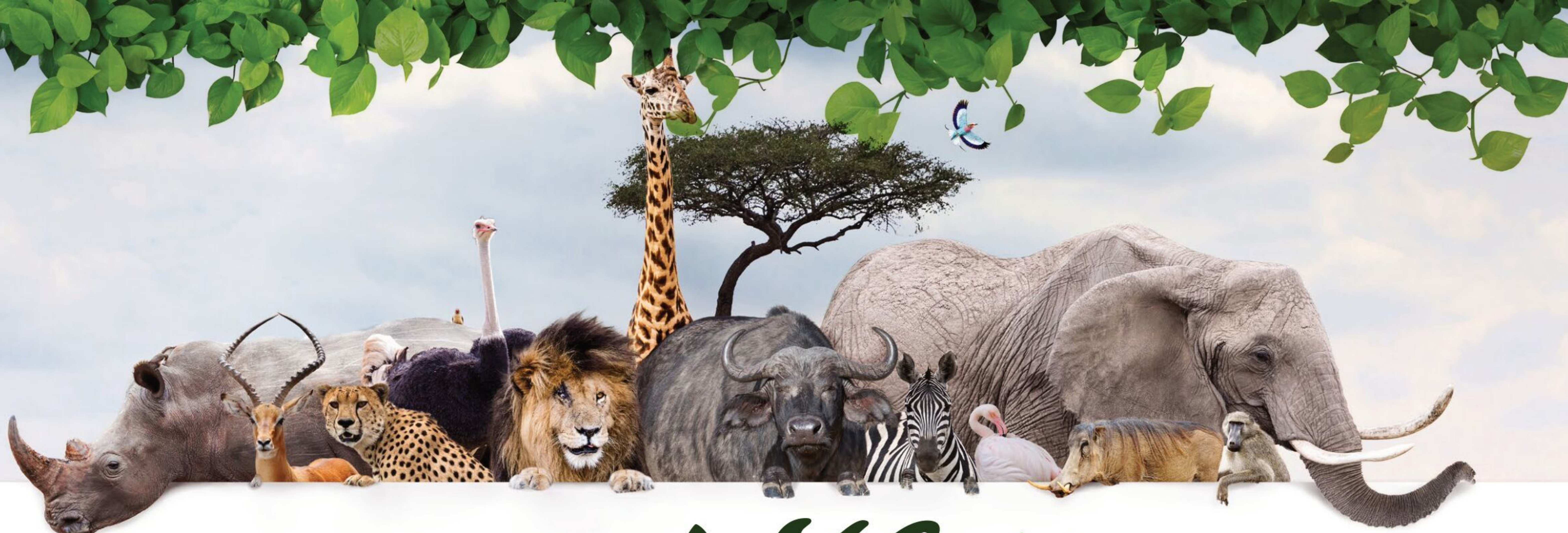
has many alternate names including the “binding bride” or “prostitute spider”. *Jorōgumo* morphs into a beautiful woman to beguile warriors into marrying her. Sometimes the Spider Princess appears to carry a baby, which turns out to be her egg-sack.

The references to menacing, deadly spiders are countless

in modern culture, and their scary natures are illustrated time and time again in our movies, art, literature, and popular culture. The spider is a powerful image that has endured since ancient times. It reflects a duality that both horrifies and fascinates us, cementing its position in our world as an unforgettable symbol.

Many folktales warn of the dangerous traits associated with spiders.

The spider is a powerful image that has endured since ancient times. It reflects a duality that both horrifies and fascinates us, cementing its position in our world as an unforgettable symbol.



Animal Holidays in September

The tradition of animal holidays has been harnessed by activists across the world to drum up support and awareness for specific species and their particular predicaments. These events and celebrations take place throughout the year, and September is no different. From elephants to vultures, iguanas and fish, if you're looking for something to spice up your days, we've selected our favorite animal holidays in September 2021.



Every September, the first Saturday is reserved for celebrating Vulture Awareness Day. They may not be beautiful, but they have been dubbed “gross-ly important” by National Geographic. Scavenger birds at heart, they actually help to prevent disease from spreading! Nevertheless, the 23 species alive today are under threat and facing extinction due to a lack of awareness about their vital role.



These cold-blooded reptiles are large, tree-climbing lizards native to the Caribbean as well as Central and South America. They can live for over 20 years, love to swim, use their tail to protect themselves from enemies, and love basking in the sun. Their color is influenced by temperature, stress, breeding, or environment, but they can't camouflage like Chameleons.



National Elephant Appreciation Day

◀ SEPTEMBER ▶
22

wrobel27 /Adobe Stock

The largest surviving land animals in the modern world, the failure of humans to protect this stunning creature is mind-boggling. Related to ancient mammoths, elephants still exist in parts of Africa and Asia and are considered a keystone species. They can live to 70 years old, carry their babies for 22 months, feel emotion deeply, and they “hug” using their trunks.



Fish Amnesty Day

◀ SEPTEMBER ▶
25

artifirsov/AdobeStock

PETA introduced this special day back in 1997 to raise awareness about the number of fish killed and consumed each year (more than all other animals combined). It falls on the 4th Saturday of September, the same date as National Hunting and Fishing Day, in the hope of reminding people that fish also experience pain and suffer from the cruelty involved in fishing.



World Rabies Day

◀ SEPTEMBER ▶
28

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World Rabies Day tries to dispel fake news about rabies, a disease that has been around since at least 2000 BC. The Global Alliance for Rabies Control (GARC) aims to promote the benefits of vaccinating animals against rabies, which they call a “preventable disease”. Present in a variety of animals, including humans, dogs, skunks, and even bats, rabies causes almost 60,000 “agonizing human deaths per year,” particularly in rural Africa and Asia.

Kazakh Eagle Hunters

The ancient art of eagle hunting, which had been in existence on the Central Asian Steppe, from Kyrgyzstan to Kazakhstan and Mongolia for 6,000 years, was in danger of dying out until a new generation of Kazakhs recently decided to revive it. The hunting practice, so-called 'horse-riding eagle falconry', is unique and is practiced with trained Golden Eagles on horseback. From ancient times, eagle hunters (*berkutchi*) in the nomadic herder societies had the role of preserving and stocking the furs of their eagles' prey, providing durable clothing for the people during the winter seasons.





THE CAT CAME BACK

A MORE THAN MYTHICAL HISTORY

Cats have been on the human scene for 9,000 years. We came out of the caves, and they were there with us. Ever since, cats have been immortalized in art. They have been painted in fresco, sculpted in stone, carved in wood, cast in silver, plated in gold, and warped in words.

|| BY GERALD HAUSMAN



FELINES have been mummified, petrified, and in modern times, transmogrified into cells of film, newsprint, and popular literature. Cats have been morphed into stuffed toys and have strutted the world's stage mewing of their magnificence.

Our love of all things feline seems to have grown over the centuries; so much so that we've given cats innumerable names— Katt, Kit, Mau, Maow, Pusa, Pascht, Puss, just to name a few.

One might ask, why do cats have such grand cultural coverage? After all, we're talking about a small, unobtrusive animal with four legs and a slender tail. A little pet who got aboard the Ark by being an itch in a lion's nose...but that's another story.

FELINE MYTHOLOGY AROUND THE WORLD

Basically, it just doesn't seem possible that so much mythos could be packed into so modest an animal. Yet such is the large truth of the small, domestic cat. Its mythology has increased its natural size to unnatural

proportions. Let's find out why.

In Egypt some 5,000 years ago, the cat was a creature of duality. Lion-headed and moon-eyed, it was already a dualistic deity, already an animal whose aspect corresponded to lunar

cycles of order and disorder, harmony and imbalance. Here was a graceful animal whose eye was a miniature moon, whose sense of balance was godlike and supreme.

Iroquois myths from North America tell of Old Woman Moon and her companion, Bobcat. While she weaves a head strap, symbolic of the moon's shape, Bobcat sits patiently beside her. Then, when she gets up to stir a pot of hominy on the fire, Bobcat pounces on Old Woman Moon's head strap, and unravels it. So, storytellers

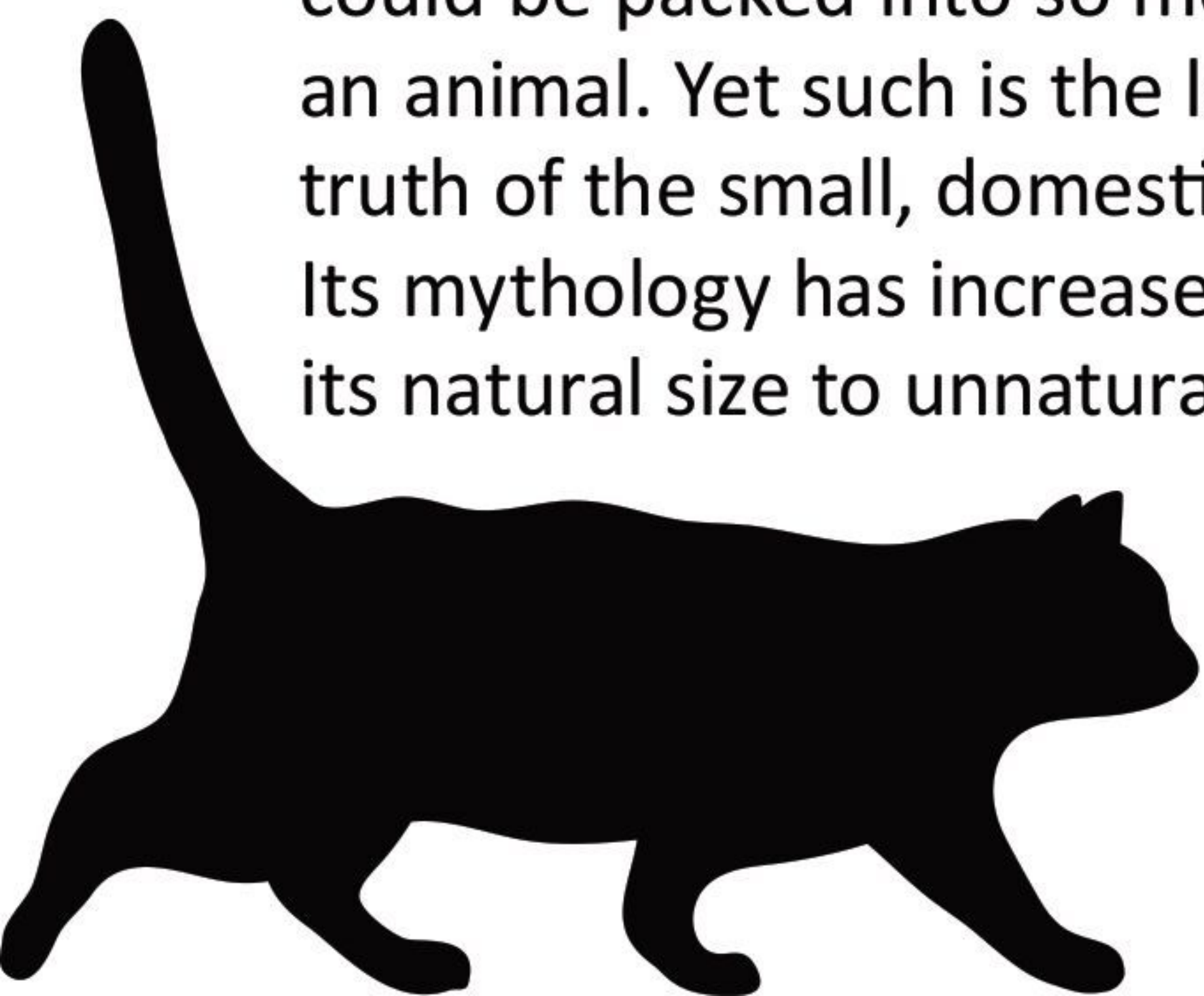
say the cat undoes the moon, forcing it to change from full to famished, once every month. The moon cycle and the human female cycle are closely related in this myth.

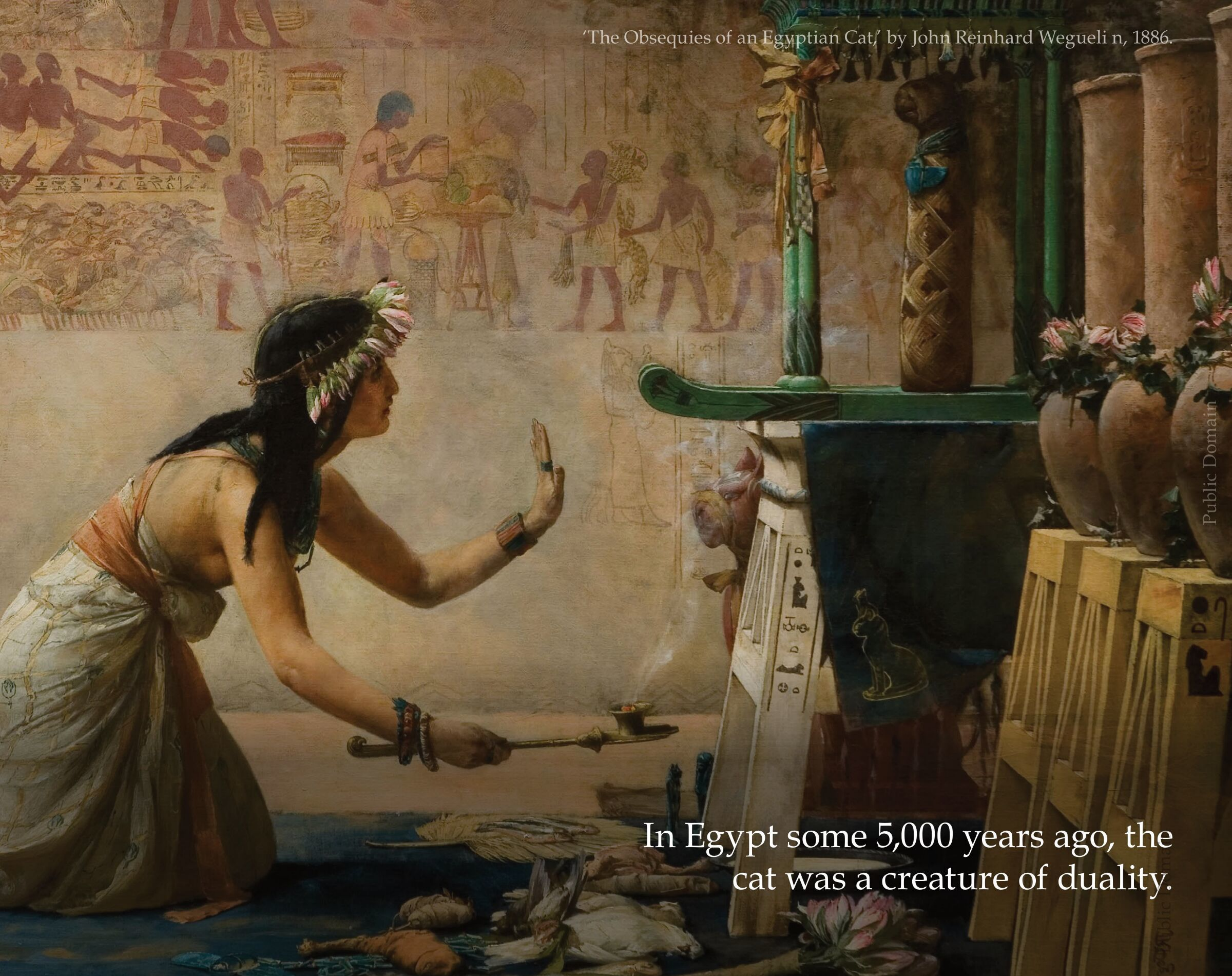
In Incan cosmology of South America, there is an inner earth called the Moon House. Inside lives a great puma or cougar. Early Andean people viewed this creature as a sun lord who nibbled at the moon, causing it to go from full to crescent. It is interesting that the word puma in Quechua comes originally



Cat's Head, 30 BC to third century AD. Bronze, gold.

Brooklyn Museum



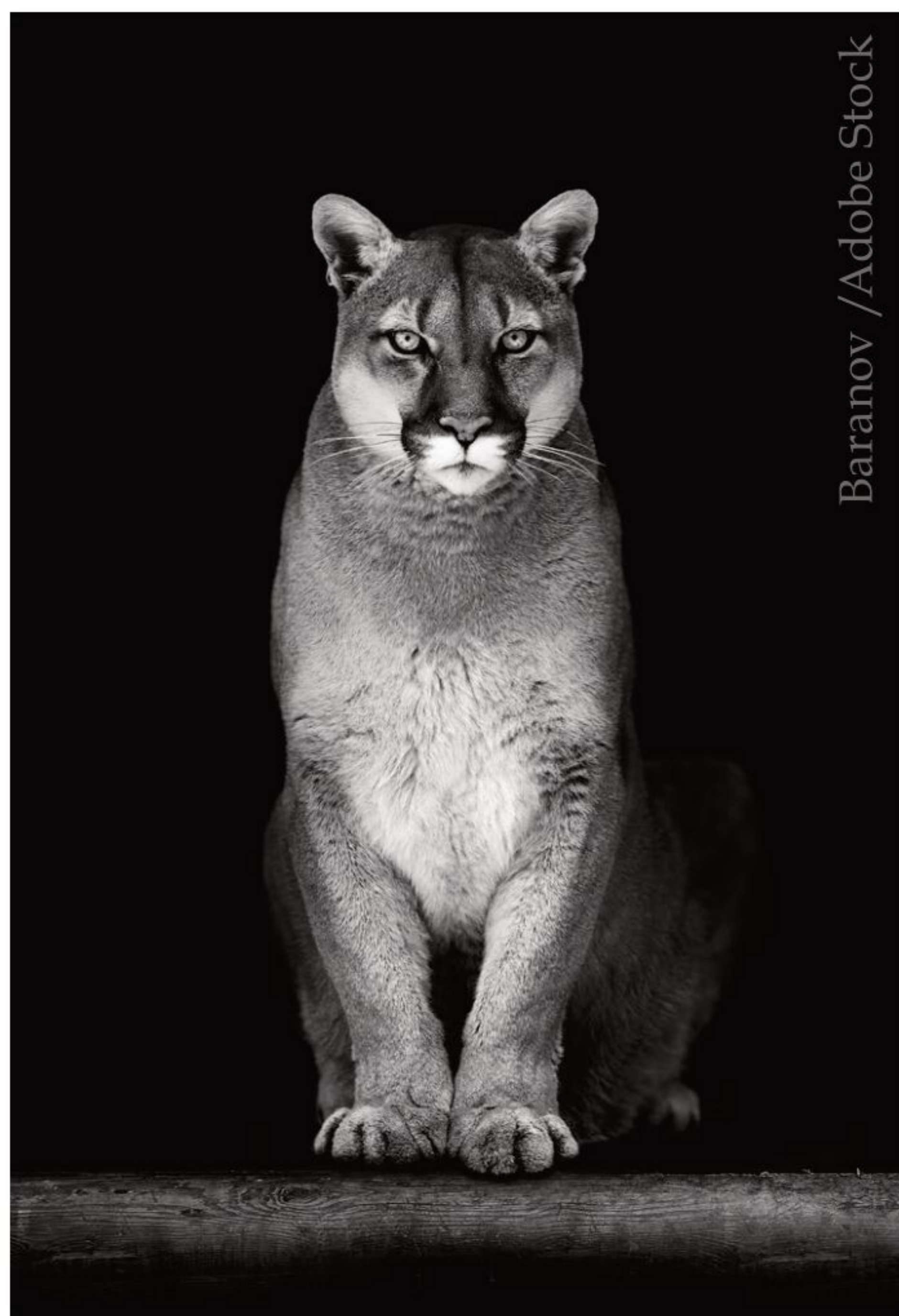


In Egypt some 5,000 years ago, the cat was a creature of duality.



Storytellers say the cat undoes the moon, forcing it to change from full to famished, once every month.

from Incan culture. The word cougar comes from the English adaptation of the Guarani word *guacuara*. Some Amerindian tribes believed that the great cat sits at the top of the heavens. Is this the same Leo that we see on a bright winter's night?



A puma.

The American Indian revered the big cat of the woods by calling it "Soft-Foot Brother." As such the cat was celebrated in art, beadwork, weaving, and song. The tribal huntsman saw in the secretive cat an artful tracker, a clever seeker of prey.

In European culture cats were also important in the early lore of earth-centered, tribal societies. Long before the Spanish Inquisition of the 14th century, cat cults thrived in France, Germany, and the British Isles. A thousand years after the death of Cleopatra, women of the Rhine met in secret groves and prayed to cats for fertility, love, and luck.

In Scandinavia and Germany, Freya was the cat goddess from whom we

inherited the word Friday. A team of whiskered cats drew Freya's chariot across the heavens. As goddess Freya spread the gospel of love in Italy and France and when twilight finally settled on the gods of old, Freya attended the funeral of Baldur, the cat god of youth. After the rites of deathly passage, Freya carried Baldur into Valhalla.



Freya and her Cat-Drawn Chariot. Stuart Rankin

In Scotland cats have always been sacred.

Fergus, the first king of Scotland, had Egyptian blood. The legend states that his family carried Egyptian cats to the Scottish Highlands. Fergus' cat-bearing ancestor, Scota, conferred her name to that country. In addition, Scotland's motto and crest still contain a cat.

The cat, in Scotland, was both animal and warrior. Men went into battle wearing cat masks and the crests of Clan Cattan. Legend says even the wails of the bagpipe were inspired by fighting cats.

When the Romans first came to the Netherlands, they found a tribe of "Cat People" living at the mouth of the Rhine. Their town *Cat Vicense* is on old maps, and in the 1950s was still called Katwyk or Cattown.

MASTERS OF THE WEATHER

In various parts of the world, from Great Britain to the Pacific Rim, in ancient and modern times, cats were believed to control the

weather. In the 19th century maritime insurance companies would not insure cargo without a cat-in-residence.

In 17th century England, superstitious sailors put a tortoiseshell cat in an iron pot. There the cat was confined until the thunder stopped. The tale of the ship's cat that saves the day is common. A very old legend indeed. World vocabulary is rife with sea coast cat magic.

For example, remember the catboat? The catamaran that rights itself in a stormy sea

is founded on the feline ability to land upright. In Italian, the term *gatta marina* refers to a boat that rights itself in rough surf. There is also the tackle, or pulleys, used to suspend the anchor to the so-called "cat's head" of the ship.



THE DARK SIDE OF CAT MYTHOLOGY

With all of these reverential, cultural thoughts about cats, one must also acknowledge the dark side of their mythology. As creatures of duality —from the very first wink of human cat-



Black cat and full moon.

Thus make-believe felines have many names— Kabouterje, Colfy, and Goblin being just a few. These are were-animals, changelings that have a sort of human and feline identity. In certain Nordic myths, a Goblin was a clever little man, who could also change into a cat. Arguably, not a cat at all but rather an ugly little person who lived in barns, water wells, gardens, and caves. Yes, the little humanoid troll cat also took residence in attics or lofts.

Historically, the goblin still lives in literature and has oh-so-many names. The Dutch call the wily creature Kabouterje. The French, Gobelin. The Germans, Kobald. The Russians, Colfy. The Welsh, Coblyn. The English, Goblin.



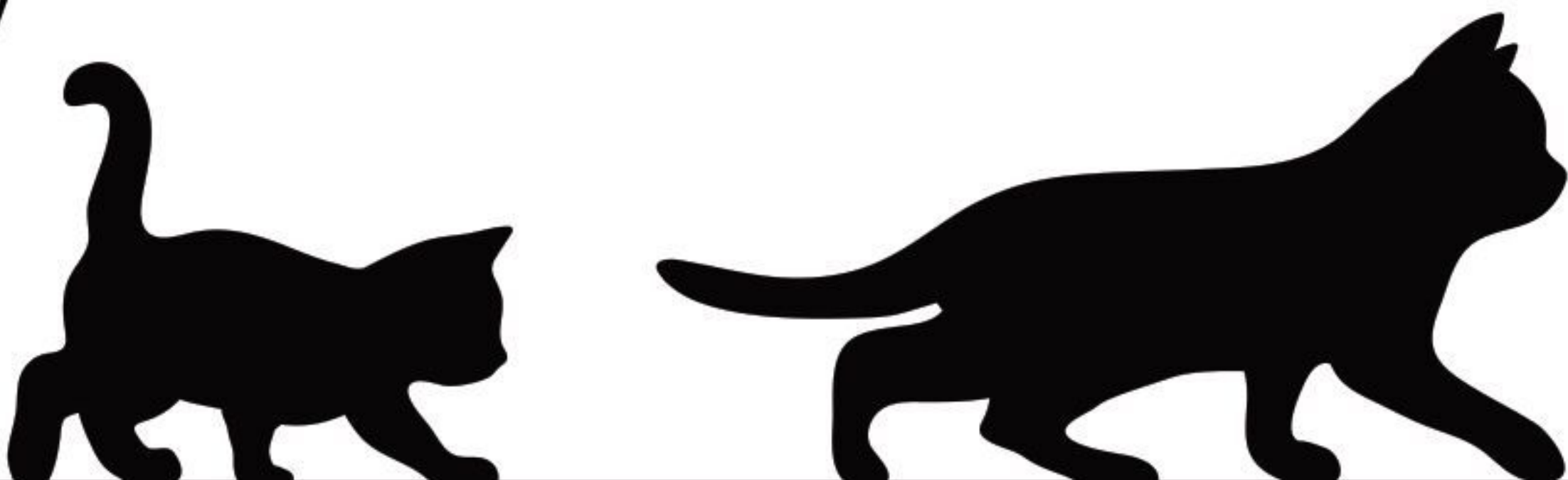
fascination— there has been this not-so-cute, noir-side of cats.

Saint Patrick, as we know, banned the cat from Ireland, but he was not the first to do this. During the Inquisition cats were anything but popular. In fact, they were burned along with witches.

So what did cat fanciers do during the next 300 years? They re-created the cat, using their overactive imagination.

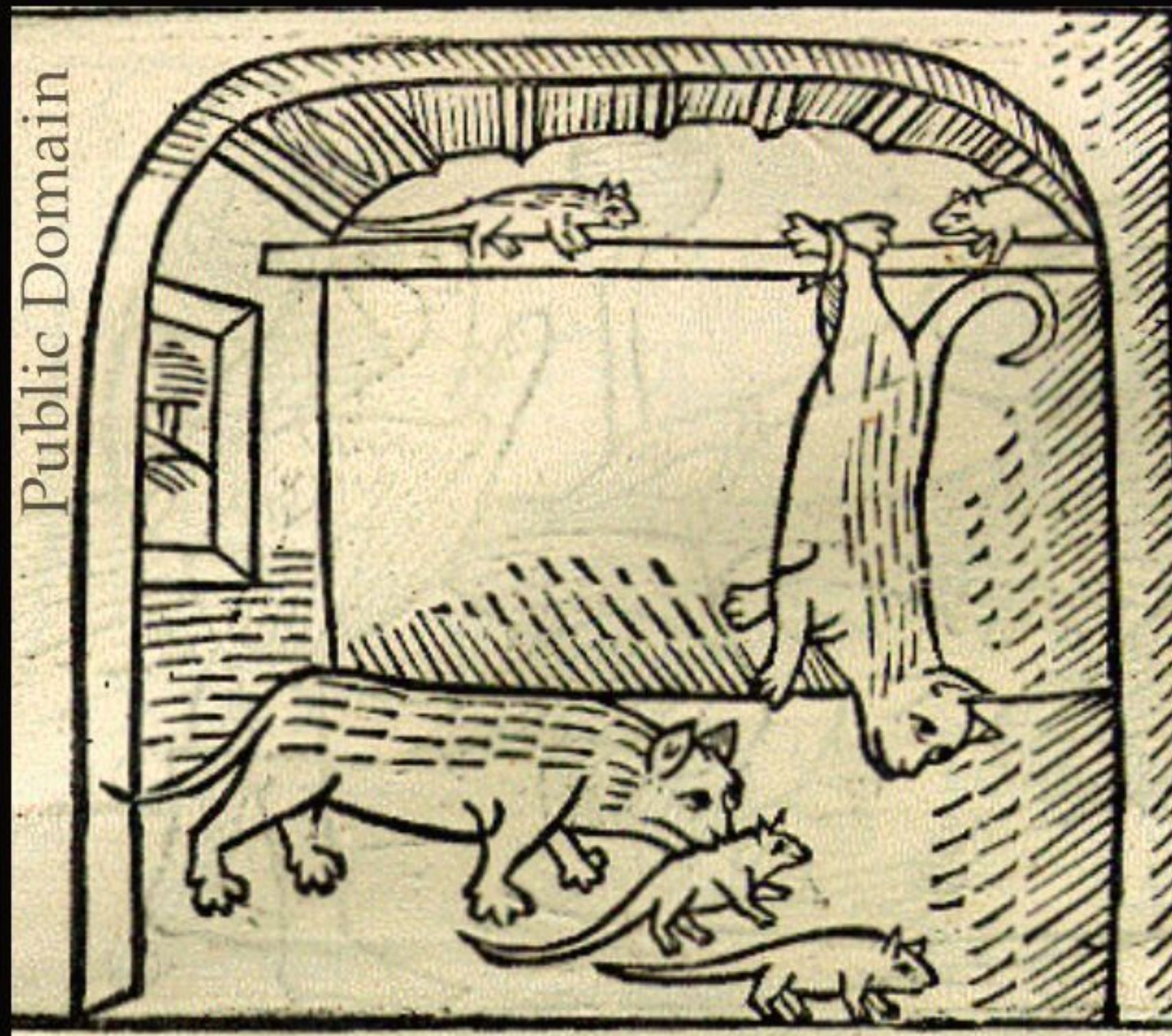


18th century folk art, 'Cat of Kazan.'



BUT THE CAT CAME BACK

In time, the red fires of the Inquisition cooled and the cat came back, as the old folksong says; The real cat, that is. It was now time for Goblin, the stand-in, to leave. And who should usher him out? None other than his feline counterpart, Cat.



An illustration of "The Cat and the Mice" from a 1501 German edition of 'Aesop's Fables.'

In Scandinavian countries, the cat of choice that guarded the house and chased away goblins was the Buttercat, known as *smierragatto*. He watched over bread, butter, milk, and cheese. Its favorite place to sleep was by the stove. In Finland, the buttercat lived in the rafters and brought good luck to all who showed respect. In return this utilitarian cat did household chores.

Keep in mind, this was a real flesh and blood feline, but it was imbued with the magical trappings of myth. When erecting a new house, the Finnish builder always made sure to bring along a shovel of ashes—a gift for the buttercat. As everyone knows, cats like to leave their remains in ashes.

While the concept of the good kitchen cat grew and spread throughout Europe, Goblin, once a good-natured guy, turned

short-tempered. There were thus many tales of the good buttercat versus the bad goblin.

NINE LIVES

In France the buttercat was known as *matagot*. This was the magical cat of the Midi that brought good luck to all who fed him. On the peninsula of Brittany in the northwest of France, this providential feline wasn't called buttercat, but rather moneycat. Nine-lived, this cat served nine owners at one time.

The significance of good luck and the number nine is not incidental. The earliest mention refers to Muhammad and his cat Muezza. One day while Muezza slept on Muhammad's sleeve, the prophet rose to leave, and rather than wake Muezza, he cut off his sleeve. After this he stroked Muezza three times down the length of his back. This myth explains why cats always land on their feet when they fall—the result of Muhammad's original blessing. Mythologists also say that the story implies that three times three is nine—thus, nine lives. Muhammad's severed sleeve became the gift of longevity to all cats.

The long-lived, sacred cat is yet another universal myth. The Japanese temple cat, sometimes called the kimono cat, has a dark spot—this is the *obi*, or tie of the kimono. Long ago such cats were brought to monasteries and deposited there for sake-keeping. The kindly tradition continues in Japan, regardless of cat colors or features.

Muhammad's severed sleeve became the gift of longevity to all cats.

In terms of breed, the prototypical kimono cat was the Japanese bobtail. When the cat's colors were black, red, and white, the cat was good luck-- *mi-ke*, meaning three color. In Japanese painting, sculpture, and luck charms, the *mi-*

ke cat (a tortoiseshell) sits straight with its paw upraised in a generous gesture of goodwill.

In mythology and in life, all things come to a close, but perhaps not to a finish. So as

we close here, we might take a last look at that most restful image—the sleeping cat. Like the earth, the feline's graceful lines flow from the tip of its nose to the tip of its tail. In *sumi*, Japanese wet brush paintings, the curled cat is a single line representing the circular sea, the round moon, the entire universe, in repose.■



Blue eyed female Japanese Bobtail.

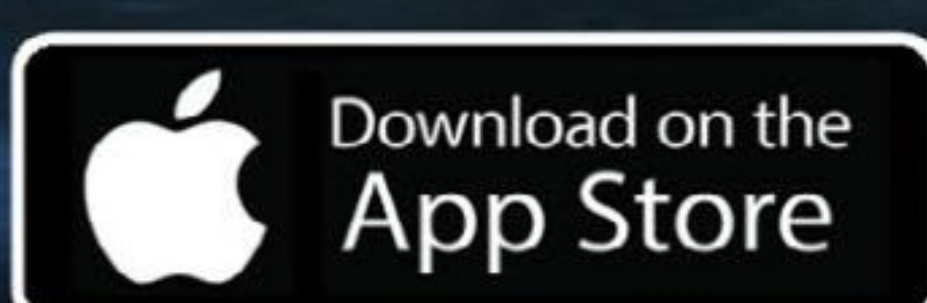
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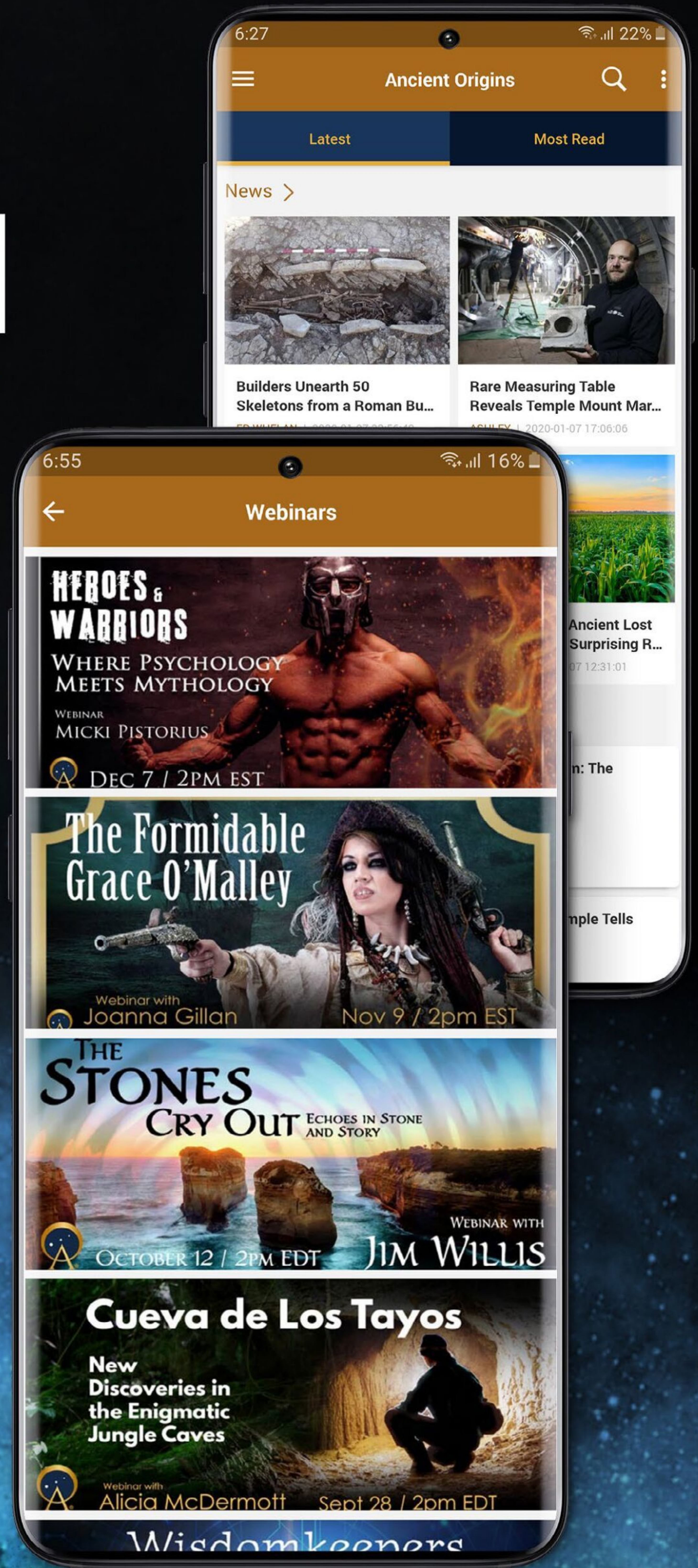
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THE EXTINCT DODO

**A SPARKLING GREEN EMERALD IN A TURQUOISE SEA, CROWNED BY AN
AZURE SKY, AND FORMED BY VOLCANIC ROCK, MAURITIUS IS A SMALL
INDEPENDENT ISLAND NATION OF 787 SQUARE MILES ON THE INDIAN
OCEAN WITH A POPULATION OF 1.2 MILLION PEOPLE. IT IS KNOWN FOR
ITS BEACHES, REEFS, AND TRANQUIL SEA. JAYSHREE MUNGUR-MEDHI, AN
ARCHAEOLOGIST AND HERITAGE EXPERT ON THE ISLAND, PARTICIPATED
IN THE EXCAVATIONS AT MARE AUX SONGES, WHERE A CACHE OF DODO
BONES AND OTHER FOSSILS WERE UNCOVERED.**

Interview with Ms. Jayshree Mungur-Medhi

|| By Dr. Micki Pistorius



MP: When did we first become aware of the existence of the dodo?

JM: 'Dumb as the dodo' is a saying which is famous worldwide, but actually the dodo only existed in Mauritius. Endemic to Mauritius, the dodo, *Raphus cucullatus*, became extinct in the late 17th century shortly after its existence was discovered and described. It seems that it was first seen and reported by the Portuguese in 1507, who named it 'Dodo' as '*doido*' means 'stupid' in Portuguese. However, the origin of the name is still debated by scientists. In any case, reported in the 16th century and extinct by the late 17th century, the existence of the live dodo was only known for about 100 years.

It is one of the faunas which disappeared from the planet within a very short lapse of time,



largely due to anthropogenic actions. For a long time it was thought that sailors hunted and ate them all. However, various causes led to the extinction of this bird. It is true that since the 16th century sailors and early settlers introduced other animals, including dogs, pigs, cats, rats, and crab-eating macaques to the islands, and it is more probable that the flightless birds and their nests on the ground became the prey of these animals than them being hunted by humans. Also their natural habitat was getting destroyed. Studies at Mare aux Songes show that they could also have died *en masse* due to natural calamities in earlier periods, even before the occupation of the island by man.



MP: The dodo is often depicted in caricature form, but what did the strange bird look like?

JM: Since its discovery in the 16th century, the dodo has been described in different ways; for instance, in 1598 Admiral Jacob Van Neck, a Dutch sailor, described it as 'larger than a swan having the body of an ostrich and feet of an eagle,' while Sir Hamon l'Estrange mentioned that 'the dodo's chest was covered in chestnut brown feathers'. Some Dutch sailors described the dodo as having quills on its sides and no wings. Such differing descriptions of the dodo by sailors led to a mythical reconstitution of the bird resulting in a fat, ugly, and dumb bird. It has been associated with the Casuary of India and some thought of it as being close to the turkey.

Based on early accounts, sketches, and paintings of dodos, the bird's image took on a phenomenal characteristic. It did not only become a symbol for human induced extinction, but also a symbol of stupidity as well. In the 1600s, portraits of comical, squat birds became the standard for future classics such as *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and even the 21st century *Ice Age* animated movie. However, recent studies including scientific data reveal that the dodo was not as fat and dumb as it's pictured in comic books and movies.

Recent archival studies, especially in South Africa, have exposed more Dutch sailors, travelers, artists and naturalists' accounts of the dodo and other extinct flora and fauna of the Mauritian soil as well as of other Mascarene islands. These vivid

accounts and descriptions of the fauna, including that of Joris Laerle, have helped to reconstruct an artistic depiction of the dodo. A fleet under Admiral Wolphert Harmenszoon anchored in Mauritius in 1601 for a month, and on board was Joris Laerle, an artist of exceptional ability with the job to draw topographical landfalls, suitable areas for anchorage, natural history specimens, and any other items of interest in his journal. Laerle drew pictures of Mauritian birds, the only sketches made from real life observations and on Mauritian soil. Close examination of the Gelderland journal illustrations has provided better insight into some extinct birds' external morphology.

MP: When did a scientific interest in the dodo develop?

JM: In the 19th century some interest started arising in the remains of the dodo and scholars started publishing papers in scientific journals; resulting in some interest in Mauritian flora and fauna. In 1865, Harry Hagginson, an engineer setting up the railways, examined some of the bones recovered accidentally while digging to lay railway tracks. He was joined by Georges Clark, a schoolteacher and amateur naturalist. The site was at Mare aux Songes, a marshy land on the south-eastern coast of the island where the remains of several of the extinct flora and fauna are preserved. Many of the dodo bones along with other fossil remains from this site were sent to several British museums, as Mauritius was at that time a British colony. (It gained independence in 1968.)

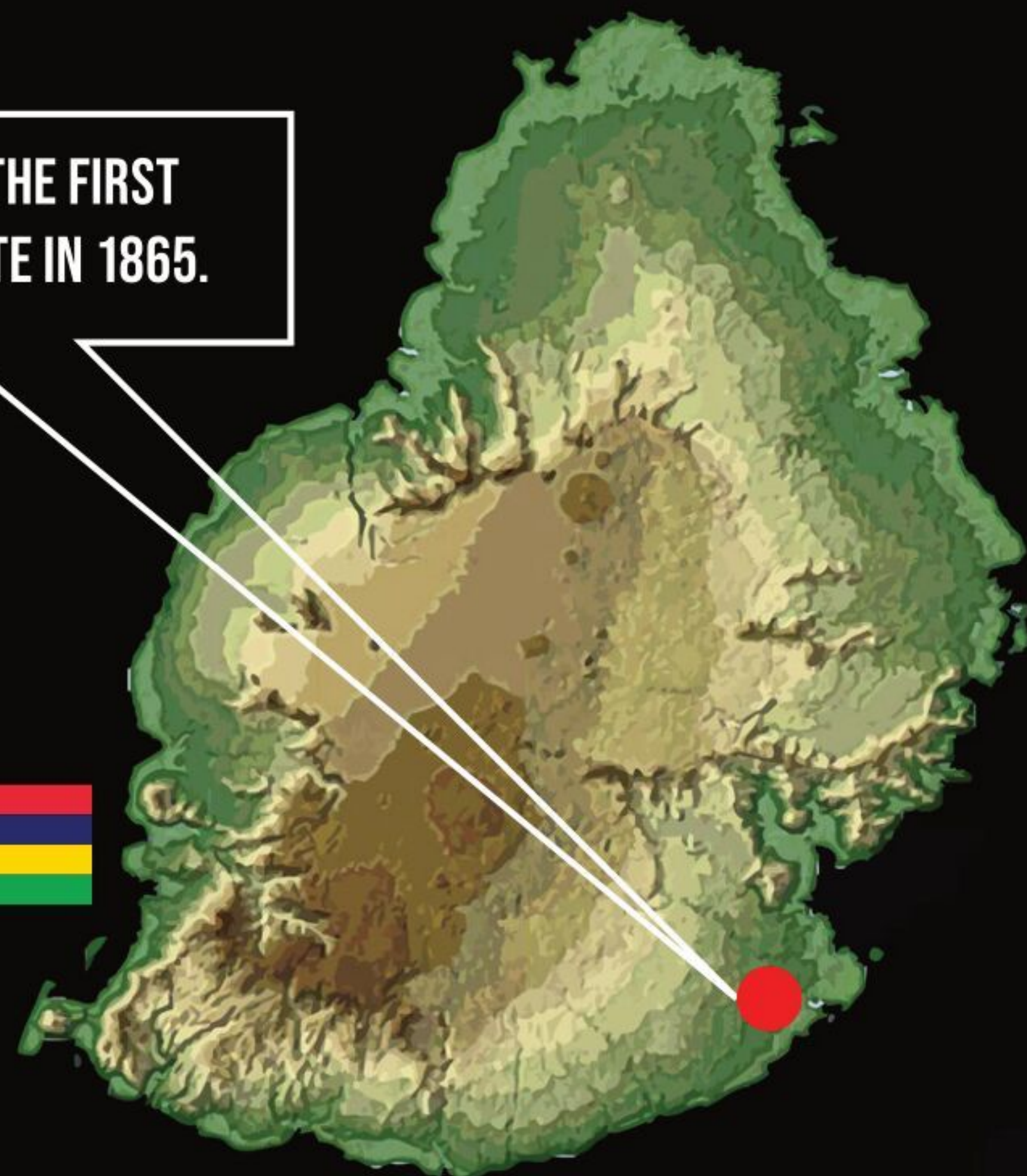
A second more thorough excavation of Mare aux Songes was organized under the guidance of Théodor Sauzier in



Luis Vilanova/AdobeStock

Dodo bird skeleton.

MARE AUX SONGES IN MAURITIUS. THE FIRST DODO BONES WERE FOUND AT THE SITE IN 1865.



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1879, where six new fossil bird species were described. In the early years of the 20th century, Paul Carié, whose family owned the estate where Mare aux Songes is located, sent more bird material to Paris and other very minor excavations took place up to the 1930s; however, no more new bird species were discovered. Located in the south-east of the island, a few miles south of the international airport, Mare aux Songes is a marshy land - much of which was reclaimed during the fight against malaria in the 1940s.

Since the 19th century, the faunal remains of the dodo were transported to different parts of the world and have since been displayed in various museums across the globe including Paris, Oxford, Cambridge, London, York,

Liverpool, Holland, Denmark, Prague, South Africa, New York, and many other places, including private collections. Remains have been discovered in caves, on the slopes of Le Pouce Mountain, and at different sites scattered all over the island.

MP: The Natural History Museum of Mauritius displays a fine specimen of the bird. Are there any other full skeletons?

JM: It seems that the unique and complete skeletal remains comprising all the bones from one single bird is housed only in the Natural History Museum of Mauritius. It was discovered

by an amateur naturalist, Mr. Louis Etienne Thirioux, a Frenchman who came to Mauritius in 1870 and spent his life searching for remains across the island. He excavated caves and boulderfield deposits around Le Pouce Mountain, and lava caves at Pailles, Roches Noires, and the Vallée des Prêtres. Thirioux collected thousands of bird skeletal specimens. Among them was a complete skeleton of the dodo and he sold it to the Mauritius Institute, now the Natural History Museum, in Port

Scientists excavating at Mare aux Songes. Kenneth Rijdsdick, Dutch Paleontologist and leader of the project, Anwar Janoo, Mauritian Paleontologist, and Nipon Medhi doing fieldwork. Image courtesy of Jayshree Mungur-Medhi.

Louis, the capital. Thirioux also dispatched several remains along with those of other extinct fauna to different parts of the world.

Indeed, scientific interest in the dodo fluctuated in scattered studies and in the 20th century, different scholars from different parts of the world studied the remains of the dodo and came up with different interpretations regarding its physiognomy, body mass, anatomy,

locomotion, and other biological and physical aspects of the bird.

MP: Tell us about the Mare aux Songes project and the discovery of other fossils.

JM: It can be said that it is only in the 21st century when the focus shifted to study the dodo in its environment along with other extinct animals and

plants. In 2005, a project researching human-induced changes to the environment was initiated by a Dutch team who reinvestigated the fossil deposit of Mare aux Songes. Scientific study of the dodo's faunal remains *in situ* commenced. In June the following year, an interdisciplinary team including geologists, geophysicists,

Left: Complete dodo skeleton. Courtesy of the Natural History Museum of Mauritius



Shin bone of a dodo. Courtesy of Jayshree Mungur-Medhi.

palaeobotanists, palaeontologists, and geneticists began a major excavation. Research on this site continued for several years with excavations undertaken annually until 2011.

The Mare aux Songes site contains a high diversity of macrofossils, including seeds, branches, leaves, insects, snails, and even fungi, and microfossils, including pollen, diatoms, and ostracods buried in a matrix of organic material. The remains from Mare aux Songes are dated back 4,000 years. The ecology was reconstituted based on the faunal and floral remains recovered from this site, which did not only consist of the dodo but also of the giant tortoise, parrot, pink pigeon, and others, all now extinct.

Other cave deposits were discovered in 2007, 2008, and 2009 at Plaine des Roches, Vieux Grand Port, La Prairie and Bois Cheri by Julian Hume, Anwar Janoo, and others. These discoveries led to the initiation of various scientific projects which are ongoing. In 2017, a team including Dutch palaeontologist Leon Claessens and Mauritian palaeontologist Anwar Janoo surveyed the slopes

of mountains in Moka, in the central region of the island, and came across several fossil remains including dodo (*Raphus cucullatus*), Mauritian owl (*Mascarenotussauzieri*), blue pigeon (*Alectroenas nitidissimis*), and giant skink (*Leiolopismamauritiana*), together with Round Island skink (*Leiolopismatelfairii*) and extinct giant tortoise (*Cylindraspis sp.*)

Again in 2017, the malacologist Owen Griffiths and palaeontologist Julian Humes identified one site which was in fact reported in the 19th century. Owen and Julian excavated the site again in 2018 and 2019. It consists of Mare la Chaux, a marshy land in the western part of the island where the bones are highly fossilized. The bones are preserved in the calcareous deposit found in the soil in this area. Initial analysis of the faunal remains from this site push the remains

back to more than 12,000 years. More analysis and dating are being undertaken to reconstruct the ecology of this part of the world. Mare la Chaux is also interesting

for its geology as a calcareous deposit as such is not very common on the island apart from the coastal line. The remains of this site predate the fossil remains retrieved from any other sites until now in the Mascarenes. This site and the remains will help to reconstitute the ecology of the early Holocene, a geological period not well studied for Mauritius.

MP: What is the scientific value of the recent research on the dodo?

JM: The recent and advanced research on the dodo has



Painting of a dodo head by Cornelis Saftleven from 1638, probably the latest original depiction of the species.



helped to give a clearer and truer picture of the dodo along with the ecology. For instance, the bird's brain proportions indicate it was not dumb at all, but intelligent, with large olfactory bulbs, suggesting a keen sense of smell for finding food. It had adapted to its cyclone prone environment. DNA studies reveal the dodo was a type of pigeon related to the extinct Rodrigues solitaire and the modern Southeast Asian Nicobar pigeon.

Comprehensive research on the dodo in its environment leads to the reconstitution of the ecology of the island thousands of years ago.

Scientists like Julian Hume, Leon Claessens, Andrew Iwaniuk, Stig Walsh, Raffael Winkler, Agnès Angst, and others continue to study the dodo and with each study new data provides pieces to the puzzle of the true picture and life history of the enigmatic dodo. Research on most of the sites in Mauritius is ongoing, complimented by research conducted in other Mascarenes islands such as Reunion and Rodrigues, where the cousin of the dodo, the solitaire, and other associated fauna have been discovered. However, it seems that better preserved remains in larger quantity originate from Mauritius.

MP: As a Mauritian, tell us about your personal experience in capturing the history of the elusive dodo.

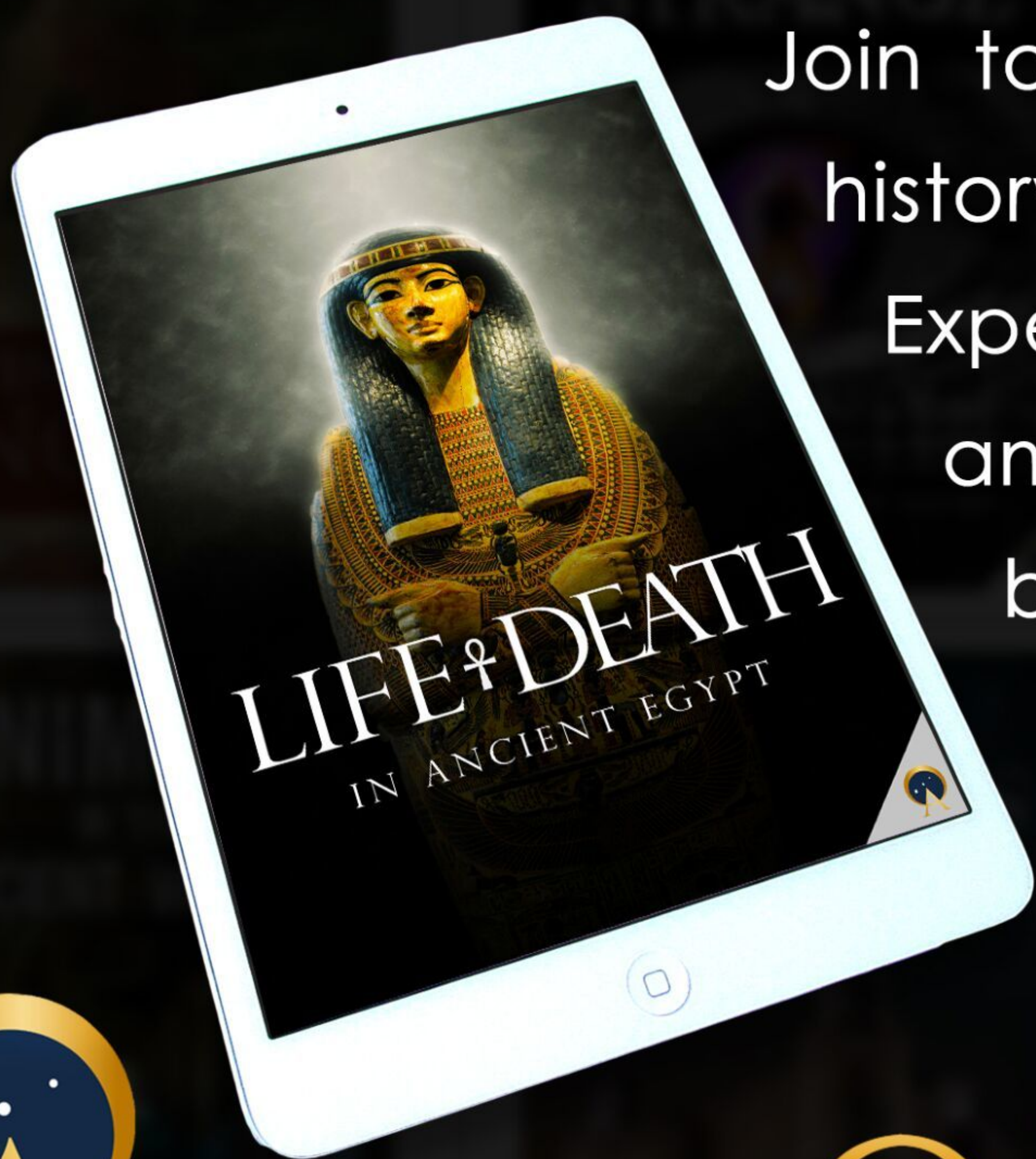
JM: As an archaeologist, I personally had the opportunity to participate in some of the

fieldwork, including the most recent work in Mare la Chaux. Though it is interesting to highlight that most of the advanced scientific research on the dodo and the other associated flora and fauna is being undertaken in foreign countries by foreign scholars and very little information about the dodo is known by the general Mauritian public. The dodo and Sambur deer feature on our national coat of arms. We extend a heartfelt invitation to everyone to visit the dodo and other extinct species in the Natural History Museum and to learn about our heritage. ■

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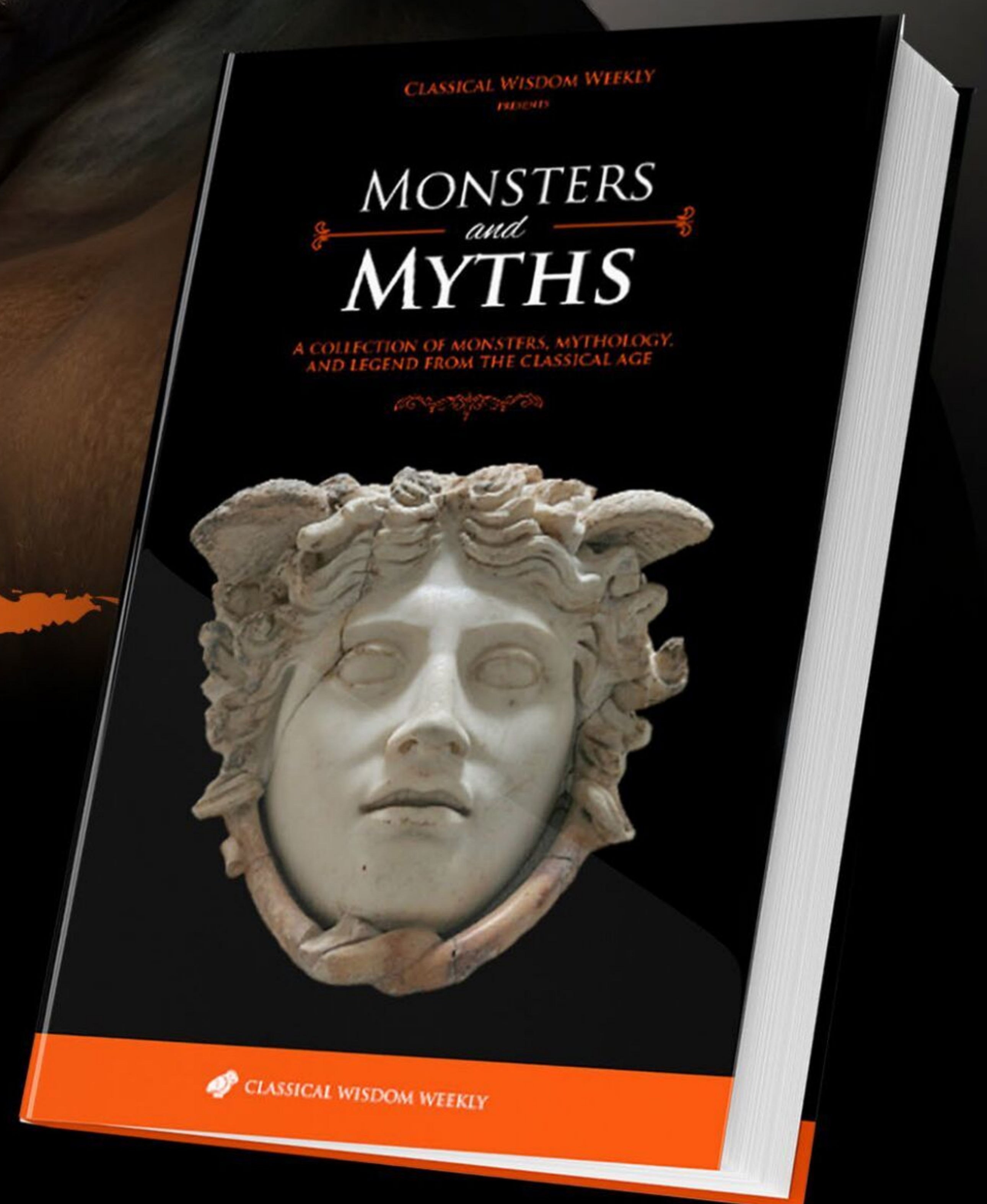


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LUCK OR MISFORTUNE?

HEDGEHOGS IN FOLKLORE AND TRADITION

|| BY WU MINGREN

The shy hedgehog does not feature prominently in mythology and folklore, but nevertheless certain cultures in Europe, Asia, and Africa where these creatures are indigenous, have incorporated the hedgehog into their traditions, with both positive and negative connotations.

ANCIENT HEDGEHOGS

In ancient Egyptian society, the hedgehog had a favorable reputation. The ancient Egyptians were familiar with two species of hedgehogs, namely *Paraechinus aethiopicus*, or the desert hedgehog, and *Hemiechinus auratus*, or the long-eared hedgehog. This is deduced from the way the Egyptians represented hedgehogs in amulets - the most common representation of hedgehogs in ancient Egypt. Images of hedgehogs can also be found in the art of some Old Kingdom tombs. In such scenes, the hedgehog is often either represented as an offering, or in hunting scenes. In some tombs in Saqqara and Giza, there are representations of 'hedgehog ships' as well. These are ships identifiable by the image of a hedgehog's face on their hulls. An

example of this ship, which is made of pottery, has been discovered at Tell Ibrahim Awad.

It is not entirely clear why the ancient Egyptians regarded the hedgehog as a 'good' animal. One popular interpretation is that the hedgehog was a symbol of rebirth, much like the better-known scarab beetle.

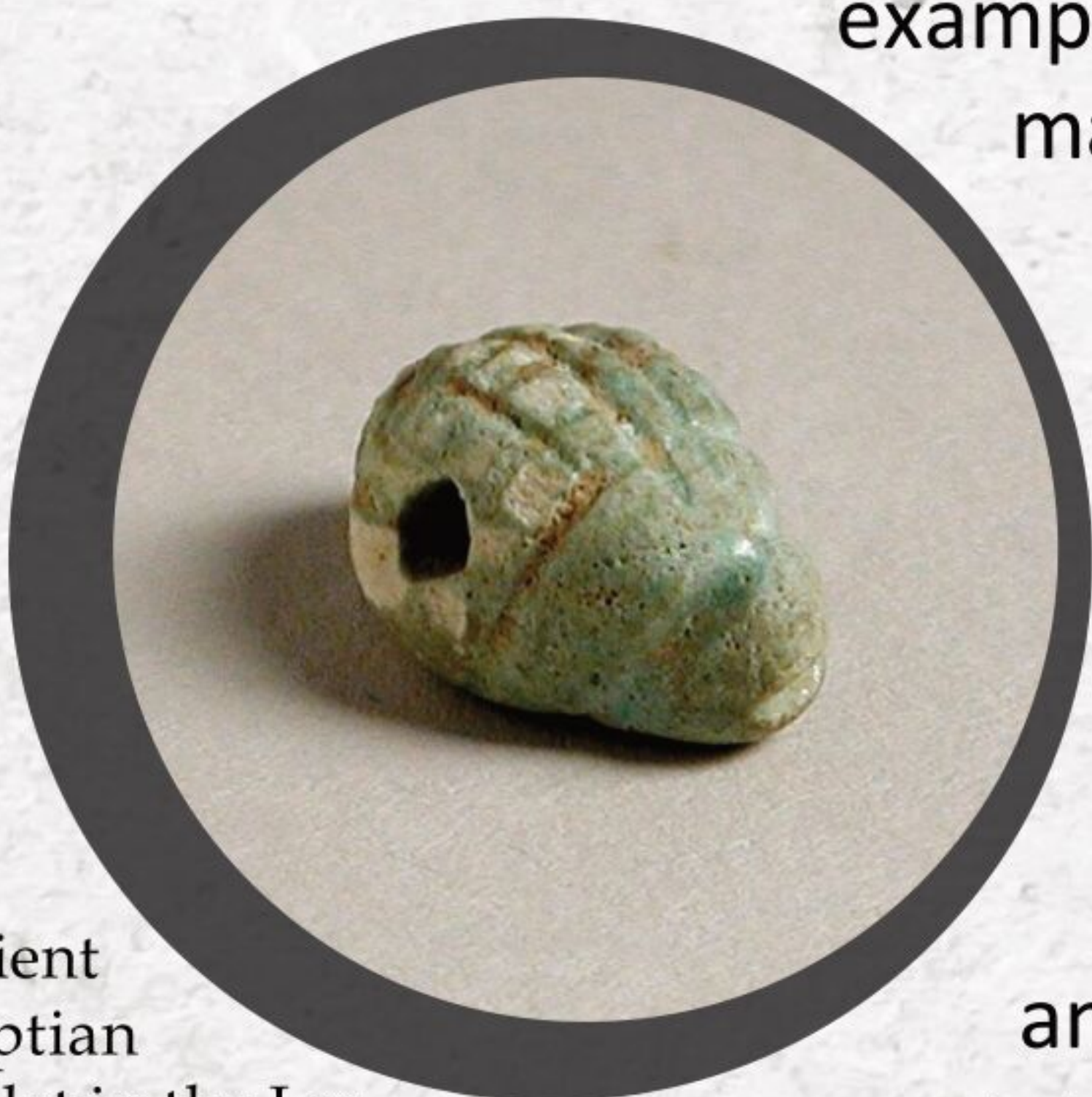
This is plausible, as hedgehogs are known to retreat into their underground dens when food is scarce, and only reappear when food is available again. It is likely that when the ancient Egyptians observed this behavior of the hedgehogs, they thought that the creature had risen from the dead.

The ancient Egyptians' admiration for the hedgehog was, however, not shared by other cultures, where it was traditionally regarded as a symbol of ill-fortune. In Mongolia, for example, it was traditionally believed that it is bad luck for a hedgehog to enter



A faience hedgehog from Middle Kingdom Egypt.

Brooklyn Museum



Public Domain

Ancient Egyptian amulet in the Los Angeles County Museum of Art.

a person's home, perhaps because hedgehogs usually walk with their heads down, thus concealing their faces. This was taken by the Mongolians to mean that the hedgehog is not an open and honest creature. Although the hedgehog was perceived negatively, the Mongolians also believed that this creature could be used to ward off "bad things", and therefore they placed the animal's skin over the doorway. Although what these "bad things" were is not specified, it may refer to snakes, as these are preyed upon by hedgehogs.

MEDIEVAL HEDGEHOGS

In Britain, the hedgehog had an even worse reputation. In the Irish language, for example, the hedgehog is known also as *Gráinneog*, which translates as 'little ugly thing'. During Medieval times, it was believed by farmers that hedgehogs were thieves who stole milk from their cows by sucking on them at night. In addition to milk, hedgehogs were

thought to steal eggs as well. There is some basis of truth

in this accusation, though the eggs that were eaten by hedgehogs were often either cracked or damaged already. Hedgehogs simply do not have the physical strength to crack eggshells.

More malicious, perhaps, was the thought that hedgehogs were witches in disguise. Thus, there was a desire to eradicate hedgehogs. In 1566, a three pence bounty was placed by the English Parliament on the head of each hedgehog that was caught and killed. The Church also offered its own bounties for the slaughter of hedgehogs. Today the hedgehog population in Britain is on the decline in both rural and urban habitats, due to a range of factors; so the hedgehog is legally protected from trapping or intentional harm. ■



QUIZ TIME!

CHARIOTS OF THE GODS: HORSES IN ANCIENT GREEK MYTH

- 
- 1 Which mythical horses could talk?
 - 2 Which mythical horse could fly?
 - 3 What are the names of the four horses that draw Helios' sun chariot from east to west every day?
 - 4 What are the names of the four horses owned by Ares, the god of war?
 - 5 What was the name of the first horse and who created him?
 - 6 What were the names of the horses owned by Eos, goddess of the dawn?
 - 7 What were the names of Achilles' horses and who sired them?
 - 8 Which famous cruel king fed his horses human flesh and who captured them?
 - 9 Who married Phoebe and Hilaera, the daughters of Leucippides the White Horse?
 - 10 Which god rode Hades' chariot of four horses, named Alastor, Orphnaeus, Aethon, and Nycteus, out of the Underworld to bring Persephone back to her mother Demeter?

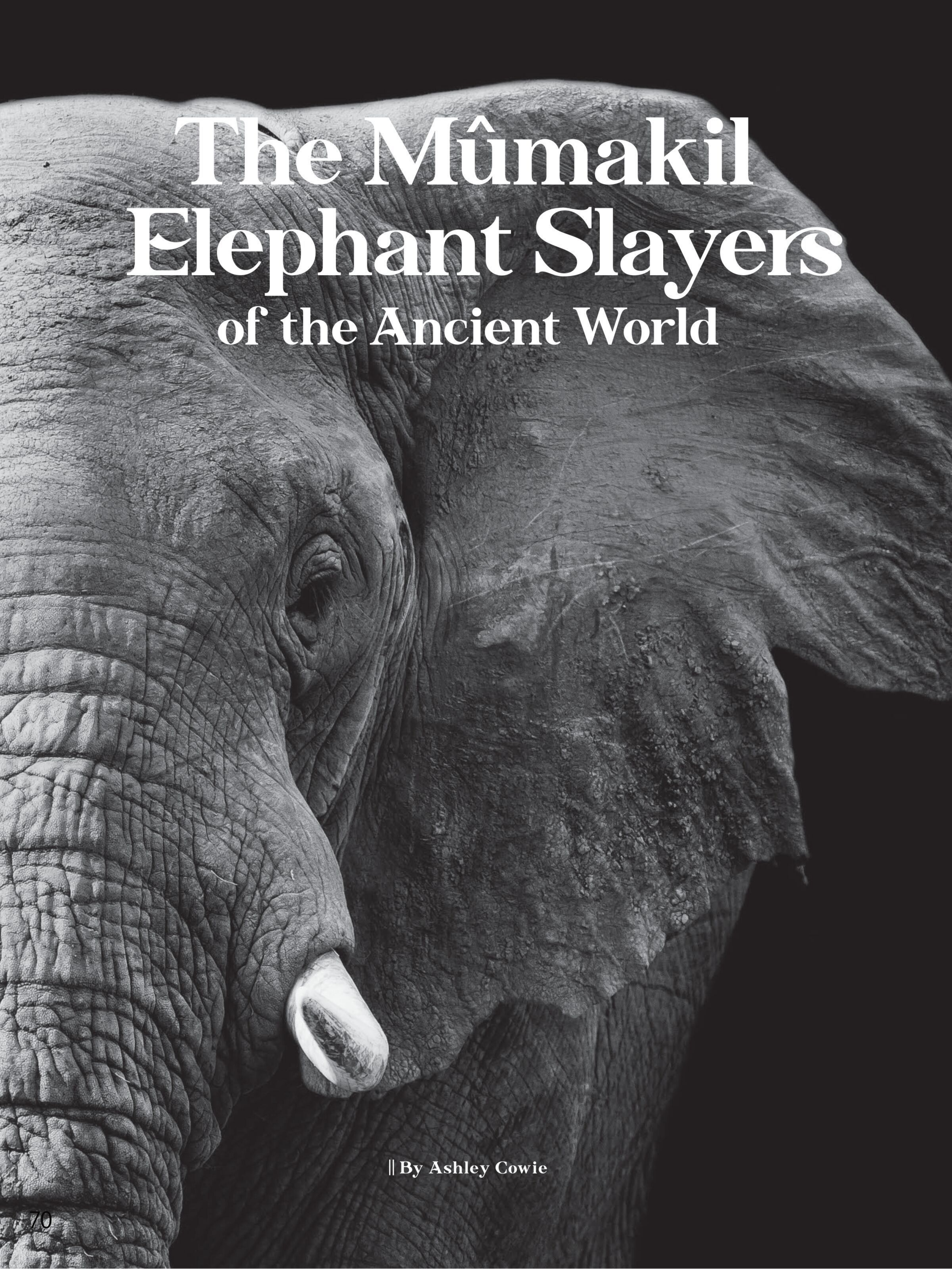
Check your answers in the Recipe section of this issue!

Daigoji Temple, Japan

Daigoji is a Shingon Buddhist temple complex in Kyoto, ancient Heiankyo, Japan, which was founded in 874 AD by the scholar monk Shobo, also called Rigen Daishi. At the top of the Kamidaigo mountain Shobo had a vision from the local god Yokoo Daimyojin, which led him to discover a well of the spiritual water named Daigo, and this is where he built his simple hermitage. This developed into a temple and monastery in the ninth century. The temple became a pilgrimage site where emperors prayed for a safe birth for their royal children.







The Mûmakil Elephant Slayers of the Ancient World

|| By Ashley Cowie



IN the ancient world elephants were worshiped as divine symbols, harbingers of good luck, and the carriers of wisdom, but they were also deployed to intimidate opposing armies and as highly influential tools of diplomacy. Perhaps the most archetypal image of elephants in the Old World occurred around 331 BC when Alexander the Great's army encountered war elephants as they swept westwards from Persia into India. Alexander defeated the Indian ruler Porus at the river Jhelum, in present-day Pakistan, who was said to have controlled 100,000 war elephants in his army.

Elephants are sometimes referred to as pachyderms (thick-skinned). About 50 to 60 million years ago, *Moeritheriums* were the roots from which proboscideans (elephants' ancestors) evolved.

Moeritheriums were pig-sized animals, with a pronounced upper lip resembling that of a tapir, that lived about 55 million years ago. As these creatures evolved, their heads got smaller and their upper lips became longer and more flexible, until finally they became trunks. The divergence between African and Asian elephants from their common ancestors, mastodons and woolly mammoths, occurred about

six million years ago. In 2009, a 200,000-year-old well-preserved skeleton of a giant prehistoric elephant was unearthed in Java. This creature stood around 13 feet tall and weighed more than 10 tons.

Adrienne Mayor's 2014 book *Animals in Warfare* examines the military applications of animals in ancient warfare. In it Mayor explains that some creatures deployed against enemies "were involuntary zoological allies, such as herds of cattle and wasps, whose aggression leads them to attack human targets."

Throughout history, animals have been trained for specific purposes, for example dogs for sentry duty, mules and camels for carrying baggage, horses for cavalry mounts, and elephants for attacking. The

The oldest evidence of a trained war elephant comes from the Indus Valley Civilization around 2000 BC.

oldest evidence of a trained war elephant comes from the Indus Valley Civilization around 2000 BC. Elephant trainers, riders, and keepers were called *mahouts* and

they were responsible for capturing and handling the wild elephants, before training them to systematically charge and trample enemies. Mayor's book also addressed counter-strategies for defending against war elephant attacks, such as the use of pigs!

CONQUERING THE WORLD WITH WAR ELEPHANTS

One of the first recorded battles using war elephants occurred in 318 BC when Polyperchon, one of Alexander's generals, besieged Megalopolis (Peloponnesus) during the wars of the Diadochi with 60 Asian elephants. Damis, a veteran of Alexander's army, helped the besieged Megalopolitians to defend themselves against the elephants and eventually Polyperchon was defeated. Those elephants were subsequently taken by Cassander and transported, partly by sea, to other battlefields in Greece, on what is believed to have been the first elephant-transport sea vessels.

War pigs, it has to be said, had it rough. The poor creatures were used in

One of the first recorded battles using war elephants occurred in 318 BC.

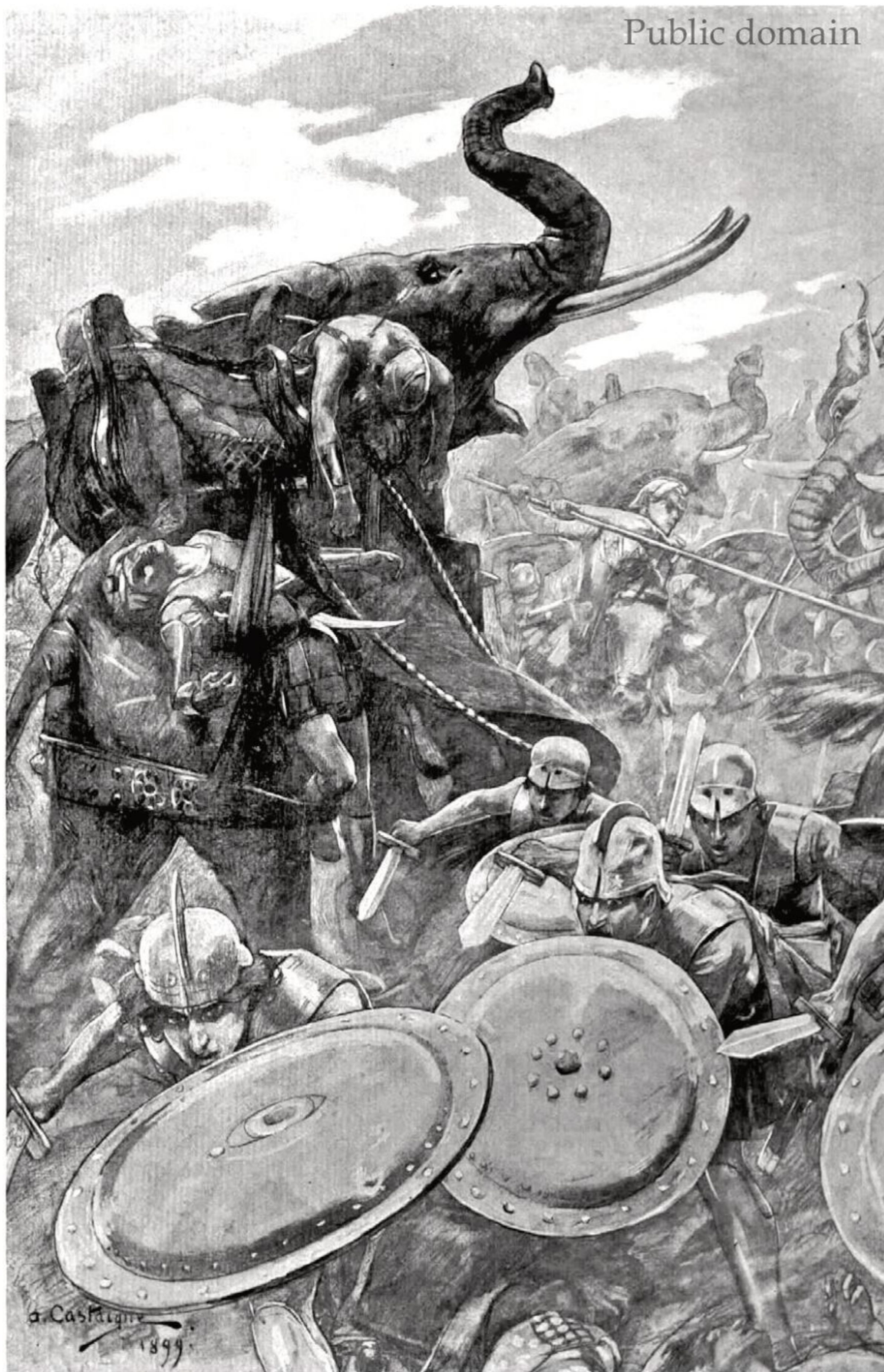
ancient warfare as a countermeasure against war elephants and it is recorded that the Romans used wild boars in their fight against the war elephants of the Tarantines. Pliny the Elder noted that "elephants are scared by the smallest squeal of the hog" and Romans exploited squealing pigs

(and rams) to repel the war elephants of Pyrrhus, the king of Epirus. Pyrrhus was asked by the people of the Greek city of Tarentum in southern Italy to help them in their war with the Roman Republic, and in 279 BC he invaded southern Italy with 26 armed, and armored, elephants.

Pyrrhus hoped his tuskers would terrify the defending Romans, but he had not counted on the beasts panicking when the pigs were released among them. Instead of attacking, they bolted, trampling Pyrrhus' own foot soldiers.

Hannibal crossing the Alps on an elephant.





The phalanx attacking the center at Hydaspes, when the Macedonian Empire annexed large areas of the Punjab region.



Hannibal famously invaded Italy in 218 BC having crossed the Alps from Gaul with an army of foot soldiers and North African forest elephants.

In 266 BC, the writer Aelian reported that Antigonos II Gonatas' siege of Megara was broken when the Megarians "doused some pigs with combustible pitch, crude oil or resin, set them alight, and drove them towards the enemy's massed war elephants." He wrote that the elephants "bolted in terror from the flaming, squealing pigs, often killing great numbers of their own soldiers by trampling them to death." The use of pigs as army weapons was developed over the next hundred years and in the first century BC Lucretius noted that "humans may have attempted to launch wild beasts, such as lions or savage boars, against the enemy, but with catastrophic results." The

Greek word *katapeltes* originally stood for shield-piercer (*kata* 'through' and *pelta* 'light infantry shield'), and this was how the first catapult machines

were used at war. However, the catapult was optimized to carry flaming animals until it was ultimately replaced by powder and gunfire.

The Carthaginian general Hannibal was one of the greatest military leaders in history. Hannibal famously invaded Italy from the north in 218 BC having crossed the

A one-tusked elephant named Surus became Hannibal's personal mount and mobile viewing platform in the marshes of the Arno.

Alps from Gaul with an army of foot soldiers and North African forest elephants. This species was smaller than the Asian and African elephant. A one-tusked elephant named Surus became Hannibal's personal mount and mobile viewing platform in the marshes of the Arno. In 209 BC Hannibal fought the Roman consul Marcellus and his war elephants created havoc until the Romans managed to wound one, which set panic among the battle-pachyderms.

Even further east, King Dutugamunu of the Anuradhapura Kingdom was the second-century BC ruler of Ceylon (today's Sri Lanka) who defeated King

Elara, his South Indian rival, to become ruler of the entire island. It is written that around the time of Dutugamunu's birth, the elephant Kandula grew up alongside the young prince and together the pair fought at

the Siege of Vijitanagara in 161 BC.

ELEPHANTS OF MEDIEVAL MONARCHS

When the Frankish King Charlemagne was crowned the first Holy Roman Emperor in 801 AD, he sent a Jewish trader named Isaac to the Persian Empire and Africa to procure an

elephant from Haroun-al-Raschid, the Abbasid Caliph who was immortalized in the stories of the *Arabian Nights*. The elephant was called Abdul-Abbas after the founder of the Abbasid empire and it was walked all the way to Charlemagne's court at Aix-la-Chapelle (today's Aachen, Germany). Charlemagne took Abdul-Abbas to war against the Danes in 804 AD but the animal was terrified and ran

from the fighting. The death of Abul Abbas is generally associated with Lippeham, which is believed to have been located at the mouth of the Lippe River where it meets the Rhine near the city of Wesel. The claim dates at least as far back as 1735 when J. H. Nünning published a notice that "a colossal bone was unearthed from the area that was plausibly a part of the remains of the elephant

Abul Abbas." Then, in 1750, another gigantic bone was found in the Lippe River that was also claimed to be a piece of Abul Abbas.

These enormous beasts were equipped with armored towers. While bowmen rained poisoned arrows down on enemies the elephant took care of things at ground level.

King Henry III ruled England from 1207 to 1272 AD and he was fascinated with wild and exotic animals. Chroniclers recorded Emperor Frederick

II of the Holy Roman Empire sending the English king a camel, the king of Norway sending him a polar bear and France's King Louis IX sending an African elephant. Historical and genealogical resources pertaining to the members of the Plantagenet

dynasty of England and their descendants between 1154 to 1485 AD say the African elephant "arrived at Whitsand, on the coast of England, in late November 1254 AD having been acquired by King Louis while crusading in Palestine." A royal menagerie was established at the Tower of London for Henry's acceptance of the elephant and the king wrote to the Sheriff of London: "We command that ye cause without delay, to be built at our Tower of London, one house of forty feet long and twenty feet deep, for our elephant." It is written that in 1258 AD, about three years after the elephant began its captivity in chilly and cramped quarters in the Tower of London, it died as a result of being given too much red wine to drink.

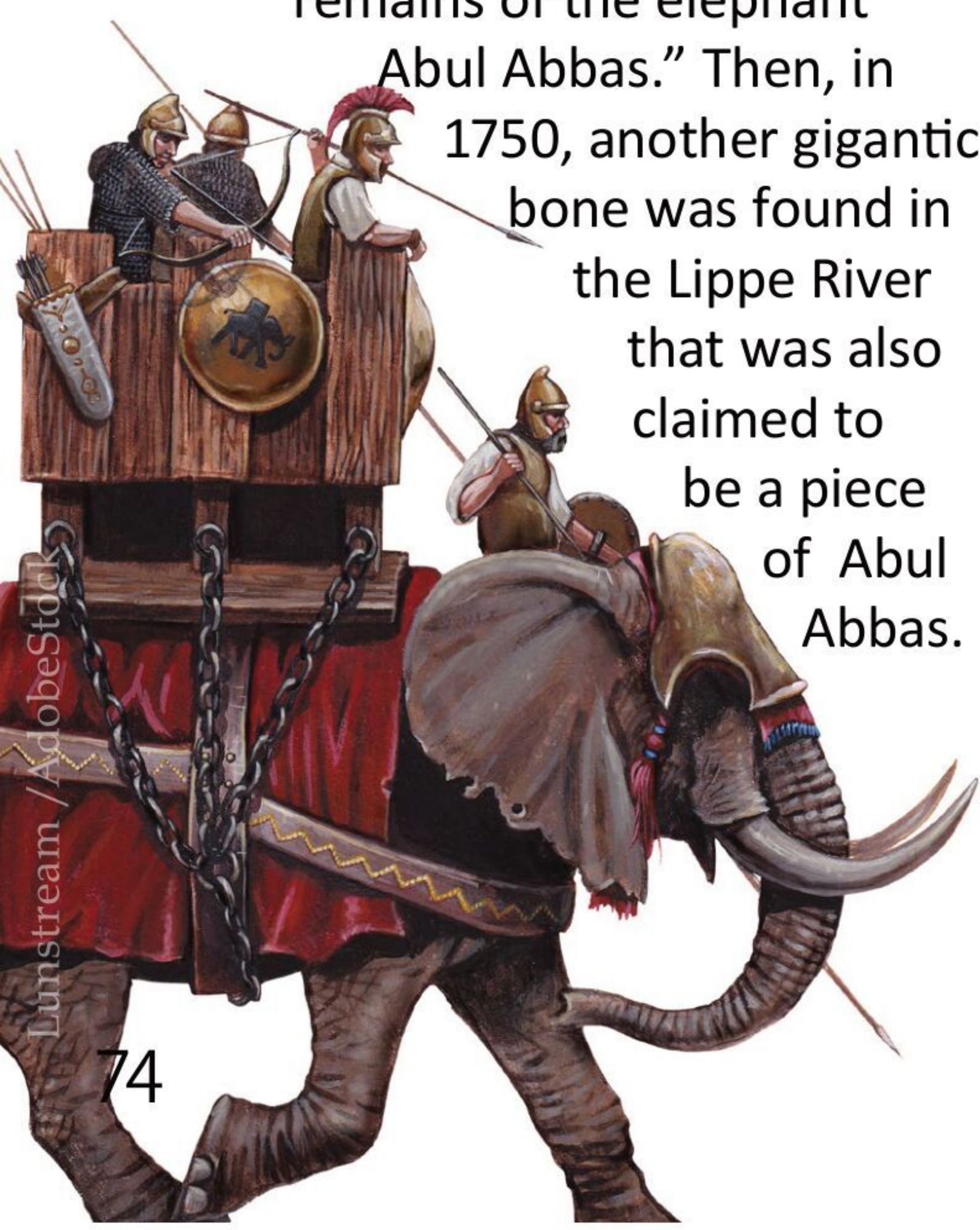
According to historian Hudson T Benjamin, in his 1996 book

The Prophecy of Berchán: Irish and Scottish Highkings in the early Middle Ages, Edgar or Étgarr mac Máil Choluim (Probus the Valiant) was born in 1074 AD and served as King of Scotland from 1097 AD until his death in 1107 AD. Edgar famously gifted either a camel or an elephant to his fellow Gael Muirheartach Ua Briain, High King of Ireland, that historians say was presumably a souvenir of the First Crusade.

ELEPHANT ARMOR

Elephant armor sounds like a dark topic, but these already enormous beasts were equipped with armored towers for bowmen to shoot from. While they rained poisoned arrows down on enemies the elephant was taking care of things at ground level in what must have been utter carnage. Elephant swords, also called tusk swords, were developed in ancient India comprising a pair of massive heavy metallic blades specially designed to be attached to tusks, and the results need no description.

With reference to the Elephant Sword, the fictional works of authors such as Tolkien become much more real, and infinitely more brutal. In his famous book *The Lord of the Rings*, Harad is described as an immense land south of Gondor and Mordor and its main port, Umbar, was the base of the Corsairs of Umbar whose ships served as the Dark Lord Sauron's war fleet. The dark warriors, Haradrim or Southrons wore scarlet and gold, and were armed "with swords and round shields and some ride gigantic elephants called mûmakil." Just imagine.



OLD BET: THE FIRST ELEPHANT TO REACH THE UNITED STATES

In the modern era, the first elephant believed to be brought to the United States was called Old Bet, thought to have been shipped aboard the *America*, which sailed from Calcutta for New York on December 3, 1795. The origins of Old Bet are a subject of debate, but what is known for sure, according to the *New York Times*, is that on July 24, 1816, Old Bet was shot by local farmer Daniel Davis while on tour near Alfred, Maine. Davis was later convicted of the atrocity. "Atrocity" is a more apt description than "crime" because it means "an extremely wicked or cruel act, typically one involving physical violence or injury." While many people believed that the farmer thought

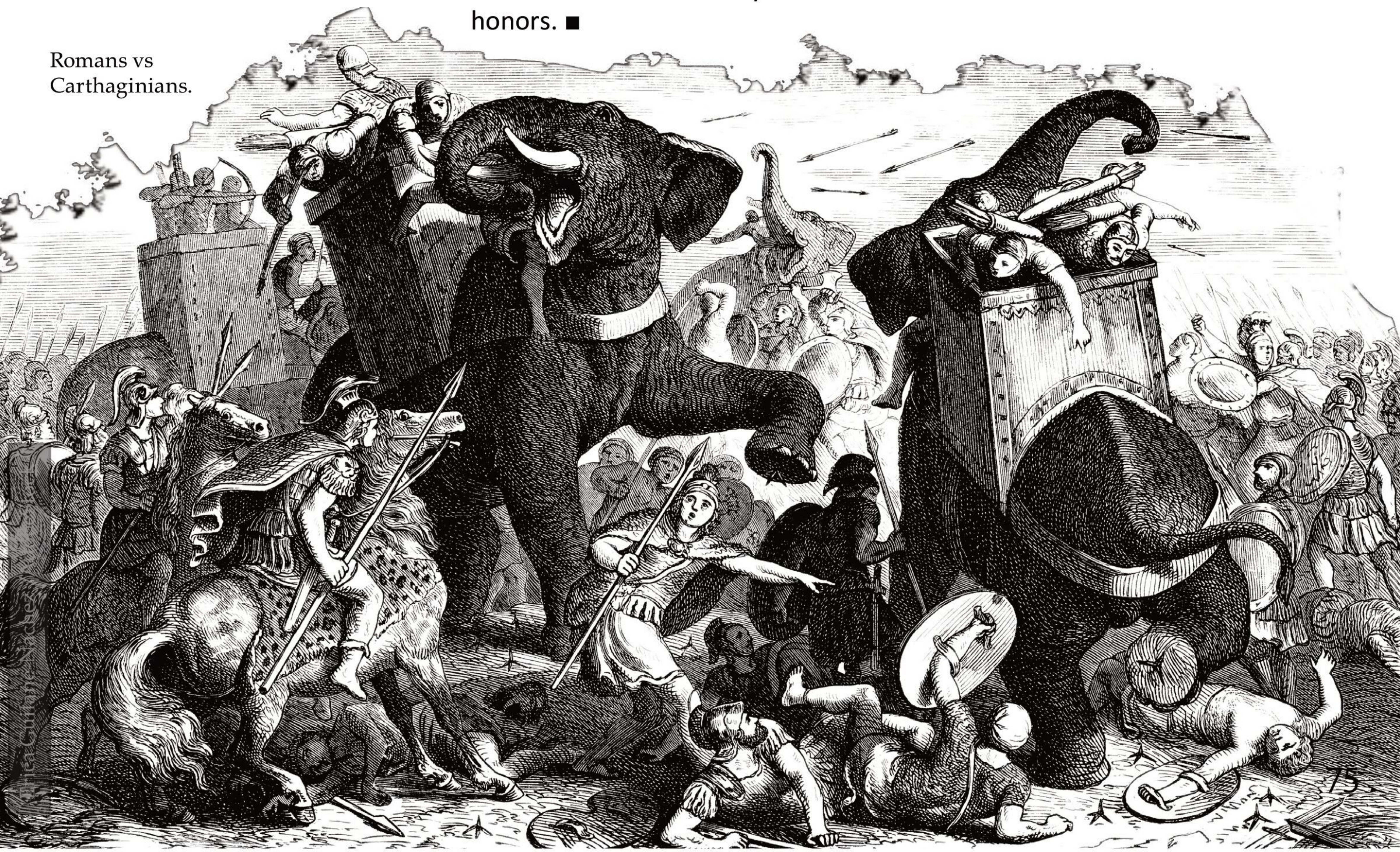
it was "sinful for people to pay to see an animal," Kate Irish Collins, author of the 2013 book entitled *Elephant named Old Bet not forgotten*, explained that most historians agree that Davis killed Old Bet out of sheer jealousy.

In 1821 the Scudder's American Museum in New York announced that they had bought Old Bet's hide and bones and would mount the famous American elephant's remains at the museum. Then, in 1825, a statue was raised at the Elephant Hotel in Somers, New York. In 1922 John L. Sullivan, a tuskless Asian elephant who performed in an American travelling circus, walked 53 miles with a wreath which was laid at the foot of Old Bet's memorial statue. Although she was not a war elephant, Old Bet was slayed and deserved her military honors. ■



Old John laying a wreath at the monument to Old Bet in Somers, New York.

Romans vs Carthaginians.





Are Humans Self-Domesticated Apes?

|| By Caleb Strom





ONE of the greatest mysteries is the origin of the human mind. Why are humans so different from other animals? Why do we have languages, religions, complex political and economic systems, and advanced

technologies such as airplanes and rockets, while other species for the most part do not have any of these things? Evolutionary biologists and

paleoanthropologists are searching for the answer to this question. One very interesting recent finding is the role that

Anatomically modern humans differ from earlier pre-modern hominins in ways similar to domesticated animals differing from their wild ancestors.

self-domestication may have played in the evolution of human cognition and particularly the evolution of human language. Scientists studying other species have noticed that anatomically modern humans differ from earlier pre-modern hominins

in ways similar to domesticated animals differing from their wild ancestors.

SEXUAL DIMORPHISM

Domestication involves making animals less aggressive and more docile so that they can be more easily controlled by humans. This process results in traits such as

smaller body size, reduced sexual dimorphism, and retention of juvenile features. They also tend to become less robust, with shorter faces and smaller teeth.

One of the reasons for this is that more mature features in wild animals and larger body size tend to help them in aggressive activities such as competing for a mate or defending territory. Additionally, sexual dimorphism in many mammals, birds, and reptiles, at least, tends to occur because of greater competition between males. If a species becomes more docile and cooperative these traits no longer have a selective advantage.

This morphological trend is seen clearly in many domesticated species. Dogs tend to be smaller and retain more juvenile features, such as floppy ears into adulthood, than wolves. Also, domestic bulls have slightly smaller bodies than their wild ancestors, the aurochs. Males and females of domestic cattle species are also closer to being the same size than they were in aurochs. Both dogs and

domestic cattle are also generally less aggressive than their wild ancestors.

This is the same pattern that scientists record when they look at pre-human ancestors. Hominins such as *Homo Habilis* and *Homo Erectus* are more robust (larger, thicker bones), have larger teeth, and faces that protrude more than modern *Homo Sapiens*. They also exhibit more sexual dimorphism.

Traits such as anatomical juvenilization and reduced sexual dimorphism occur in domestic species

because they are associated with a reduction in aggression - but why would they be associated with anatomical modernity in humans? One explanation is that over the course of human evolution, humans

became less aggressive and more cooperative due to some sort of selective pressure for more cooperation. This caused humans to begin to differ both behaviorally and cognitively

Humans became less aggressive and more cooperative due to some sort of selective pressure.

from other hominins. In this way, humans may have become self-domesticated.

SIMILARITY WITH BONOBOS

Another possible example of self-domestication is that of the bonobo. Bonobos, like humans, have retained juvenile features into adulthood, such as shorter faces and rounder craniums

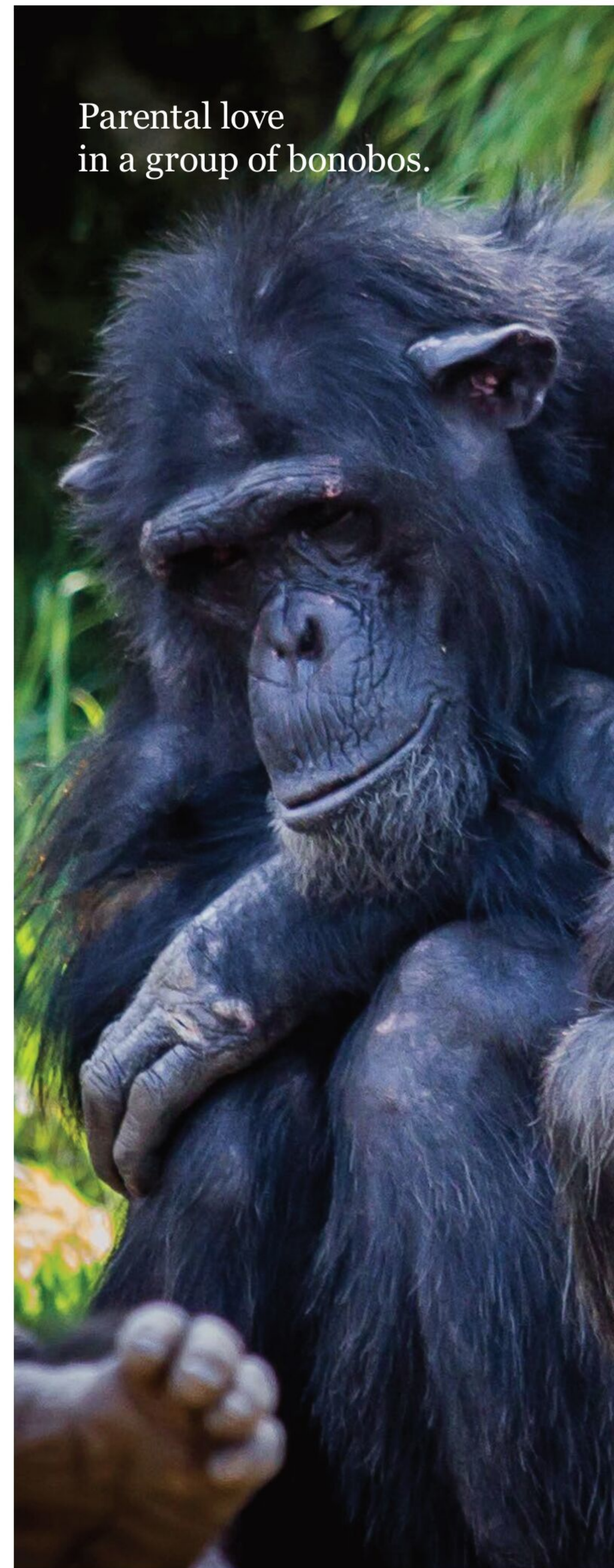
than common chimpanzees, the other species of chimpanzee that lives north of the Congo River, which separates the two chimp populations. Bonobos are also in general less aggressive and more cooperative and collaborative

in acquiring food and females. One hypothesis for the behavioral differences between bonobos and common chimpanzees is that common chimpanzees share their habitat with gorillas. Because of this, chimpanzees need to compete for

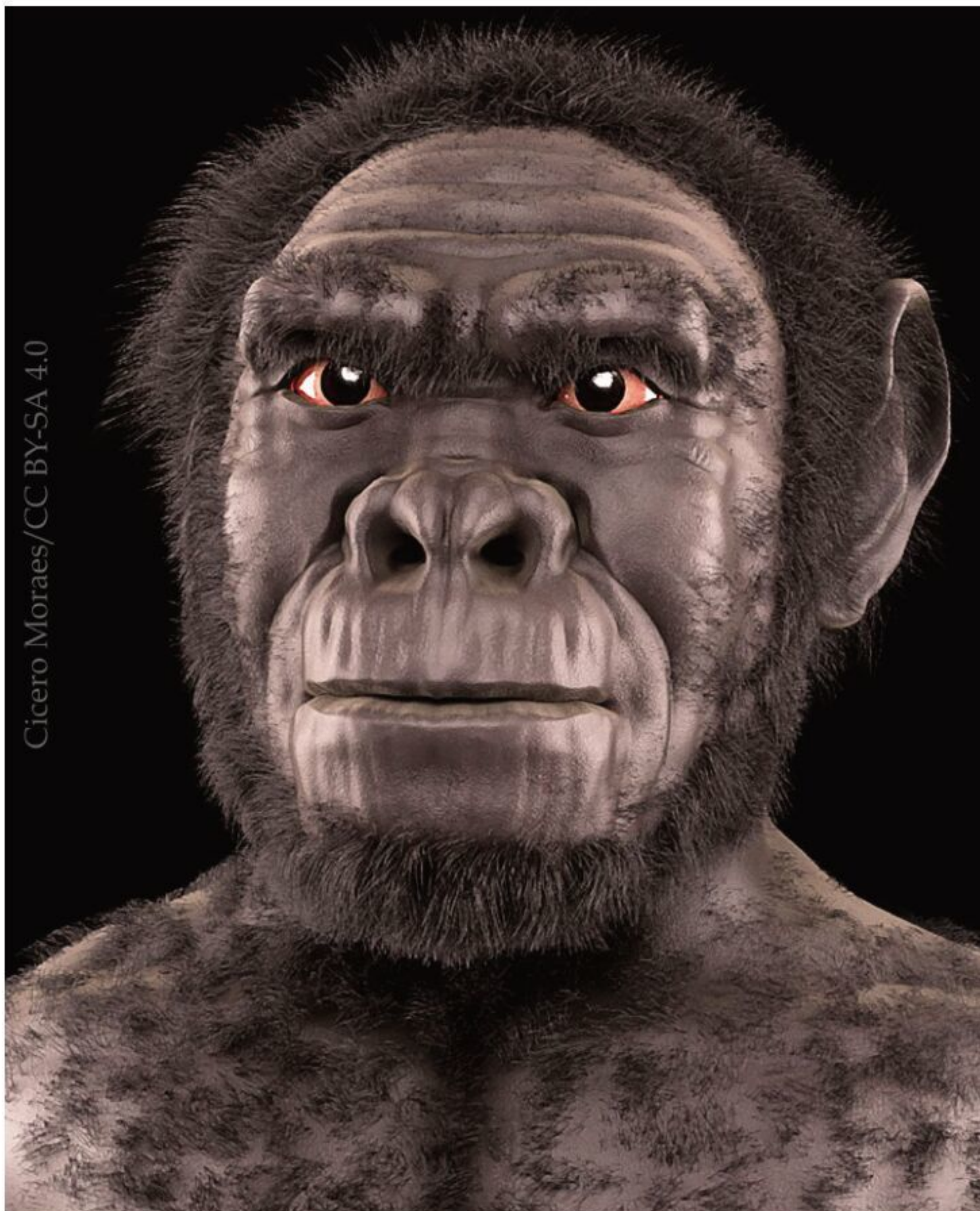
territory - leading them to be more aggressive.

Increased aggression over territory has also led to increased aggression when it comes to seeking mates. It seems that

Parental love in a group of bonobos.



since common chimpanzees are already competing violently over territory, they naturally use the same method to control access to females. Bonobos south of the Congo River do not share their territory with other ape species and thus do not have to be in as close quarters. This results in less need for aggression and more room for cooperation in finding food and acquiring females.



Homo habilis - forensic facial reconstruction/approximation.



Sen2Photography/AdobeStock

Self-domestication and increased cooperation could explain the extraordinary cognitive abilities of modern humans.

INCREASING COOPERATION AND COGNITIVE DIFFERENCES

How could this increased cooperation, if it occurred in humans, have resulted in the vast cognitive differences between humans and other great apes? Scientists studying human evolution have found that there are at least two ways in which this process of self-domestication and increased cooperation could explain the extraordinary cognitive abilities of modern humans.

The first one is language. In environments where there is plenty of competition - either within a species or between species for access to resources such as food or mates, there is a selective pressure for certain uses of sound and not others. As a result, the use of sound is very limited and is only used for purposes where there is a selective advantage for using sound, such as defending territory, finding a mate, or to express

Gorillas have some 98% of the same DNA as humans, but have evolved differently.



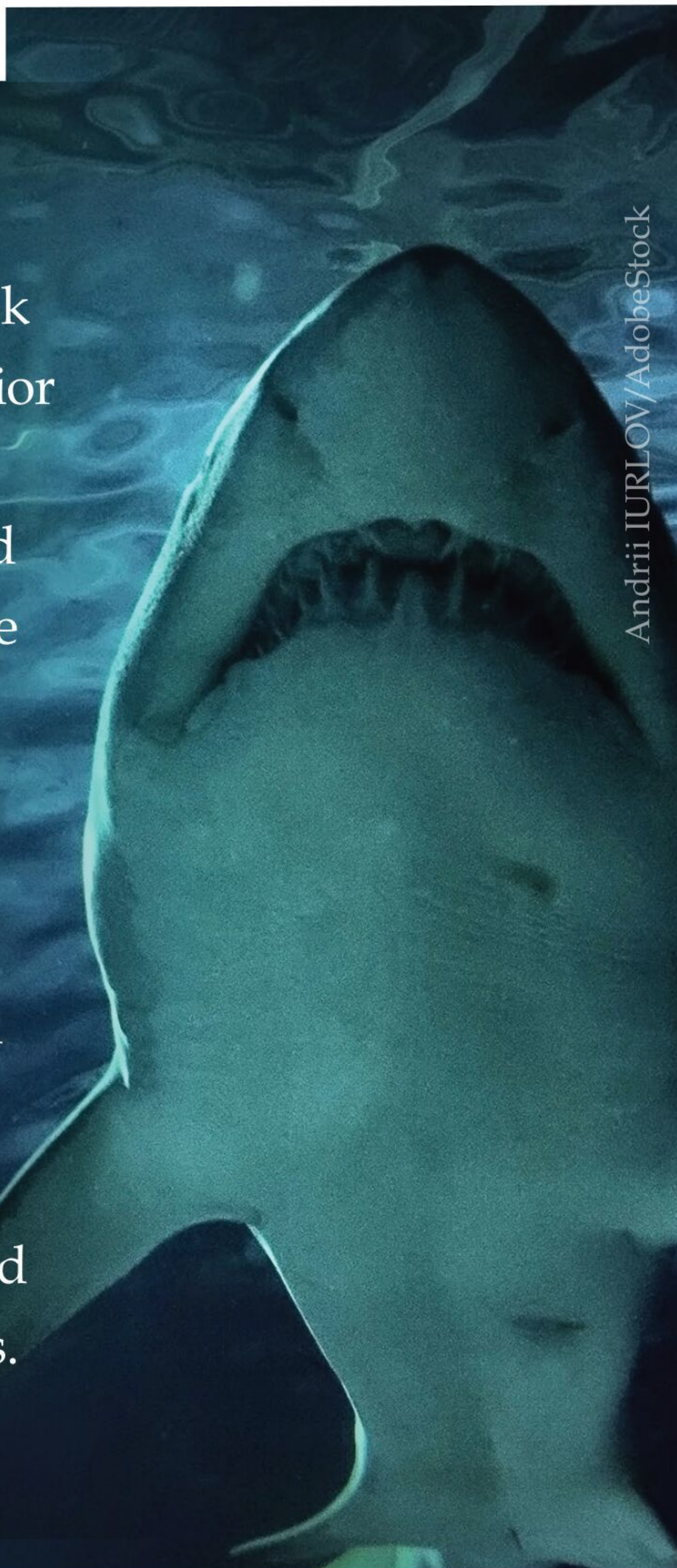
Baranov/AdobeStock

an emotion. Sounds are all very specific and stereotyped for these purposes so that they are not at all ambiguous and all animals immediately recognize them and can differentiate them from other messages.

Increased cooperation implies that selective pressure for the use of certain sounds abates and sounds can take on a greater variety of uses. This allows for sounds to be used more creatively and to exchange more kinds of information than orders (stay away) and individual desires (I want this food or that mate) or emotions (I am scared). Sound can be used for cooperative purposes such as to help a hunting group find escaping prey or to indicate to the group that an older individual is about to teach them something, such as how to make a tool.



A mathematical pattern of movement called a Lévy walk describes the hunting behavior of many animals, including sharks, birds, honeybees, and human hunter-gatherers. The hunting pattern involves a series of short movements in one area and then a longer trek to another area on a discrete grid rather than in a continuous space. Research has shown that it is optimal for searching for sparsely and randomly distributed targets.



The capacity for sound to be used for conveying different messages, such as communicating to the group something that will help them in their common goal, facilitates the evolution and development of language, as we understand it. This is not to say that common chimpanzees are incapable of learning language as great ape sign-language shows, but it does show why common chimpanzees had not previously come up with it on their own, without the aid of the more cooperative *Homo Sapiens*.

The second area in which greater cooperation could have led to greater cognition is the skill of tool making. Cooperation alone would not necessarily lead to the development of the technical skills needed to make tools, such as spatial reasoning and the ability to form a blueprint in one's mind of what the



CURApotography/AdobeStock



Gojodenkov/AdobeStock

The cause of the emergence of the modern human mind is multi-faceted.

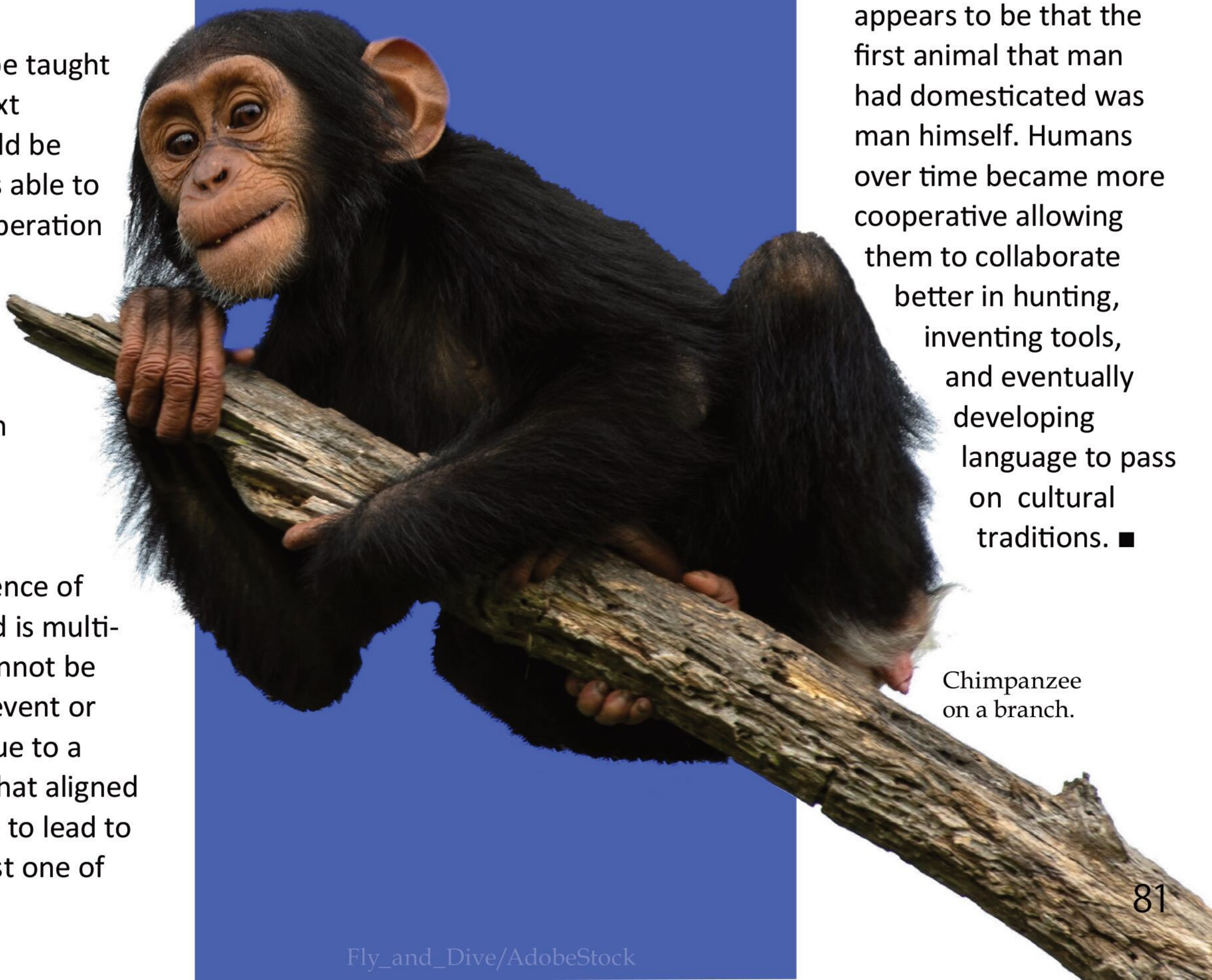
end-product should be, but it is necessary.

Technical skills need to be taught and passed on to the next generation and this would be easier in a species that is able to cooperate. Without cooperation tool making traditions might be lost simply because transmission is poor due to a lack of communication between individuals and groups.

A MULTI-FACETED MIND

The cause of the emergence of the modern human mind is multi-faceted and probably cannot be narrowed down to one event or process. It likely arose due to a combination of factors that aligned at the right point in time to lead to human cognition. At least one of

these factors, however, appears to be that the first animal that man had domesticated was man himself. Humans over time became more cooperative allowing them to collaborate better in hunting, inventing tools, and eventually developing language to pass on cultural traditions. ■



Chimpanzee on a branch.

Fly_and_Dive/AdobeStock

BESTARIUM
VOCABULUM



BREATH TAKING BESTIARIES

Compendiums of Medieval Monsters and Morality

|| By Liz Leafloor

During the Middle Ages the phoenix rose from its ashes to be reborn, dangerous dragons battled elephants to the death, and the pelican tore out its own breast to feed its young with its life's blood — at least, these were the vividly illustrated lessons found in ancient bestiaries.





Strange beasts, mythological and real, graced the pages of ancient bestiaries.

A bestiary, or *Bestarium vocabulum* is a book of beasts. Rich, decorative images illuminated in gold and silver showcased a compendium of living animals and birds, rare and common, and mythological creatures, benign and dangerous. These illustrated volumes, popular throughout North Africa, the Middle East, and especially Europe during the 12th century, not only contained observations on the natural world, but also imparted moral lessons to Medieval readers.

According to David Badke's *The Medieval Bestiary*, the Middle Ages was an intensely religious time, and it was believed in the Christian west that the animal kingdom and the natural world had been set down by God to provide instruction to humanity. In this view, humans were felt to be within nature, but apart from

Rich, decorative images illuminated in gold and silver showcased a compendium of living animals and birds.

it. Badke notes, "Animals were said to have the characteristics they do not merely by accident; God created them with those characteristics to serve as examples for proper conduct and to reinforce the teachings of the Bible." Thus, certain creatures represented certain ideals: the king of beasts, the lion, represented Jesus and his lordly position. The elephant was a model for human moral behavior and chastity, as it was believed to mate only once for procreation rather than pleasure.

THE PHYSIOLOGUS, ANIMALS ORDERED BY WILD TRAITS

These compendiums were influenced by the original manuscript dated to between the second and fourth centuries AD. The *Physiologus* text (meaning "The Natural Historian" or "Naturalist") was written by an

unknown author in the original Greek. It was translated into Latin around 700 AD and then into many different languages across Europe and the Middle East. This opened up these regions to strange and surprising European beasts and legendary creatures, as well as the moral lessons and meaning of the animals within.

The ancient text, believed to have been written in Alexandria, contained approximately 40 animals native to northern Africa,



as well as their imagined traits and habits. Each animal was associated with a symbolic and moralizing interpretation. The *Physiologus* is said to be one of the most widely distributed and copied books of the time, after the Christian Bible. Indeed, Medieval ecclesiastical art and literature was heavily shaped by the symbolism of the animals and these interpretations survived in Europe for over a thousand years.

A COPY OF A REPRODUCTION OF A TRANSLATION

Many bestiaries were made based on the translated information found



Dragons were believed to be the natural enemy of the elephant, who was deemed the model for human morality.

in the *Physiologus*, but additional interpretations were added. These later manuscripts were not exclusively religious, but a description of the world as it was known at the time.

It was believed in the Christian west that the animal kingdom and the natural world had been set down by God to provide instruction to humanity.

Whale depicted in an illuminated bestiary. Public Domain.



Et belua in mari q̄ grece aspidō delone dr. latine aspidō testudo. Leta ē dicta. ob immanitatem porci. ē. enim sic ille qui excepit ionam. cuius alius dicitur. dicitur fuit ut putaret infernus d

herodi: diaboli sicut & dic uulpi illi. & incanti
 cis anticorum. Capite nobis uulpes exterminan
 tes uineam d' equa uinea dauid dixit.



DE ANIMALE QUID DICT PANTHER

Propheta sic dicit factus sum sicut panther in domo
 effrem. Physiologus sic testificat de pantherio qm̄ talis
 ē naturae ius ut omnium animalium sit amicus.
 Inimicus autē ē draconis. Variū ē enim aspectus
 illius sicut tunica ioseph. Etiam & totus uariū est.
 Tacturnū ē animal & mansuetus ualde. Sicut
 manducauerit & sacius fuerit dormit in sua spe
 lunca & t̄ci die exsurgit de somno & cum surrexe
 rit de loco suo & foris exierit uociferat uocē magna

Thus, an Icelandic bestiary included local fauna—fewer elephants and more birds and seals—so as to impart a more relevant message and important moralization to people of the area. In particular, the notable inclusions of the whale and the mythical Siren represented the northern tundra environment. It is believed translators writing far-flung bestiaries excluded certain animals because they'd never seen or heard of the strange foreign beasts, and were confused about the source entries. However, these were uncomfortable edits to make, as it was seen as challenging or disbelieving the word of the Church and God.

FANTASTIC BEASTS AS SYMBOLS OF GOOD AND EVIL

Each animal, real or imagined, imparted a lesson through the language of symbolism. While painted as dangerous, most of the animals represented both

Each animal, real or imagined, imparted a lesson through the language of symbolism.

good and evil, and were possessed of both traits. The lion, for example was king of the beasts (and directly connected to Jesus in an allegory that is repeated to this day). Lions were said to sweep away

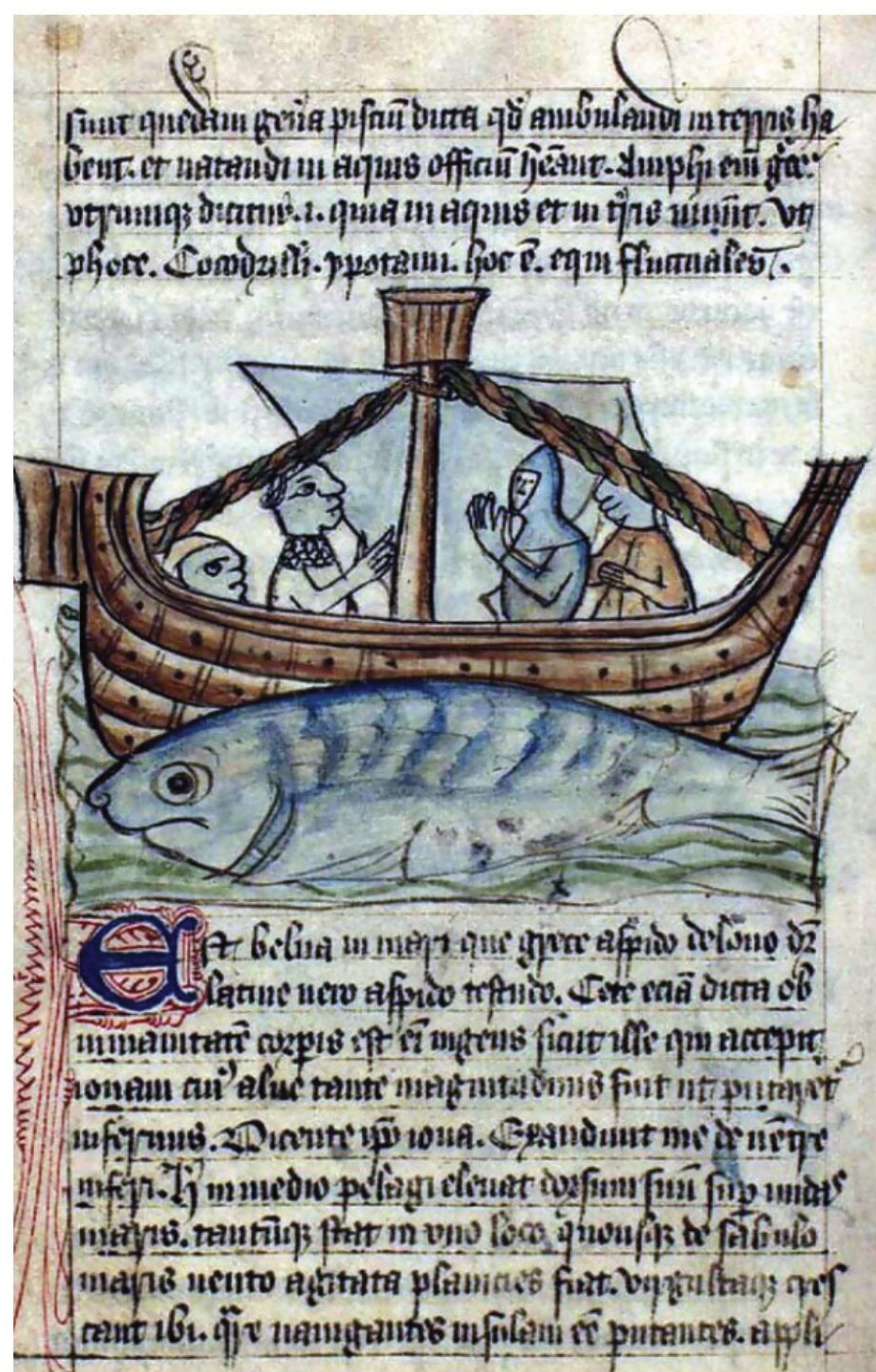
their tracks with their tufted tails, to sleep with their eyes open, and to be afraid of white cockerels.

The elephant, the most popular beast in bestiaries, was believed to be a chaste creature, to copulate modestly, back-to-back, thus satisfying the Medieval ideal that sex in marriage was purely for the purpose of reproduction. The elephant was said to have no joints in its knees and was usually depicted with a *howdah* or tower on its back.

The mythical griffin had the wings and head of an eagle, the body of a lion, and was said to violently attack and kill horses.

On the other hand, antelopes, or *antalops*, had long horns which they used to cut down trees. If they became tangled in branches, these animals would scream and bellow to be set free, and would become easy prey for hunters who were alerted by the noise.

The whale - or turtle-like *aspidochelone* was a huge sea monster. Since its back was huge and craggy, and covered with greenery, it was often mistaken for an island in the sea. It was believed to lure sailors to land on its back, and then would purposefully pull them under the water to their deaths. According to bestiaries, *aspidochelone* represented Satan, who deceives those whom he seeks to devour.



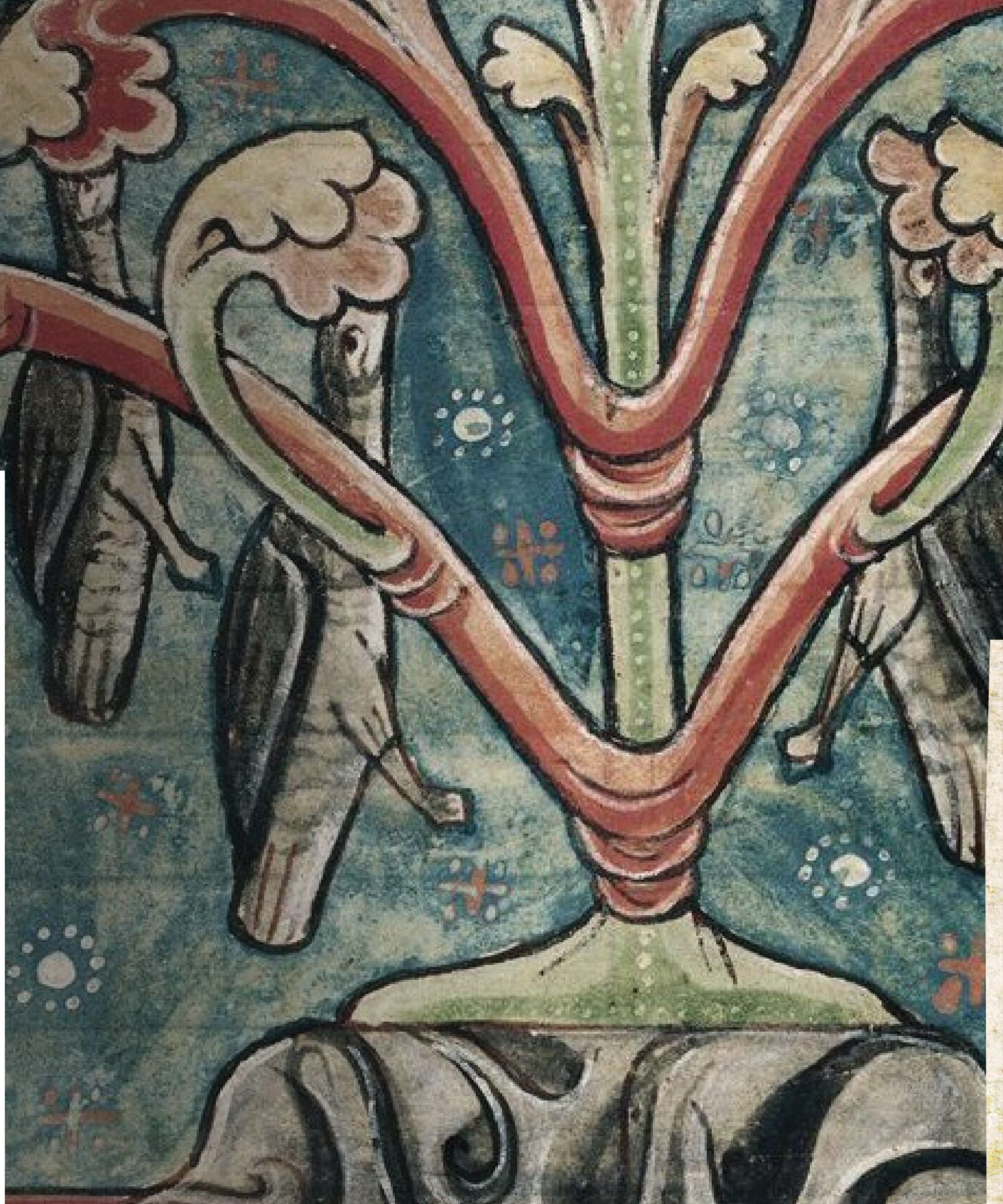
The Aspidochelone lures hapless mariners to land on its back. Danish Bestiary, c. 1633. Public domain.

The boar was considered the most savage of all animals (and that's something, as the dragon was seen as a dangerous, deadly foe).

The boar was associated with the Antichrist, and was seen as capable of killing hunters with its formidable tusks; furthermore, it personified the cardinal sin of Lust, in polar opposition to the virtue of Chastity. In this symbolism, the boar was lecherous and gluttonous beyond measure, capable of feeding on its own young, human corpses, and small children. For all of that, the boar was believed to personify strength and bravery, as it was both powerful and fearless.

Dragons were believed to be the natural enemy of the elephant, and would dispatch them without compunction. The dangerous serpents had their power in their lashing tails, and not so much their teeth or breath. A dragon would coil around its prey and suffocate it. Said to originate in India and Ethiopia, it was believed dragons feared the Peridexion tree, which would harm them with its shadow. According to bestiaries, dragons could not tolerate the roar of a panther, and would run and hide at the sound.

Bestiaries remain beautiful, ancient works of art and literature showcasing the beliefs and fears of Medieval people and their view of the natural world. They also convey the richness and importance of cultural myths, as the wild animals and strange, imaginary beasts found in the aged pages are still widely known and referenced today in popular culture. ■



Wild boars from the Aberdeen Bestiary. Public domain.



Saint Guinefort is perhaps one of the most unusual saints in Christianity. This unique 13th century saint was a greyhound! Following his brave protection of a baby, which culminated in his death, and reports of miracles occurring at his grave site, Guinefort was declared a “saint for the protection of infants.”

St. Guinefort’s story is included in a piece of work known as *De Supersticione*, which was written by Stephen de Bourbon, a Medieval historian and inquisitor who lived during the 13th century. The author records that he came across the story of St. Guinefort while he was in Lyon, France. During his time, he heard many women confess to carrying their children to St. Guinefort, and he decided to inquire further into the matter.

De Bourbon found that St. Guinefort was a greyhound belonging to a certain lord of a castle. The lord had a wife and a baby son. One day, the lord, his wife, and the baby’s nurse left their home, leaving the baby in his cradle. While they were away, a snake – a traditional symbol of evil at that time – entered the home, and made its way towards the child. Guinefort, who was left with the baby, saw the serpent and attacked it. After a fight, the greyhound succeeded in killing the snake, and threw it away from the cradle. The snake’s blood, however, was smeared on the cradle, as well as on the dog’s mouth and head.

When the nurse came back, she saw the bloody mess. Thinking that Guinefort had killed and devoured

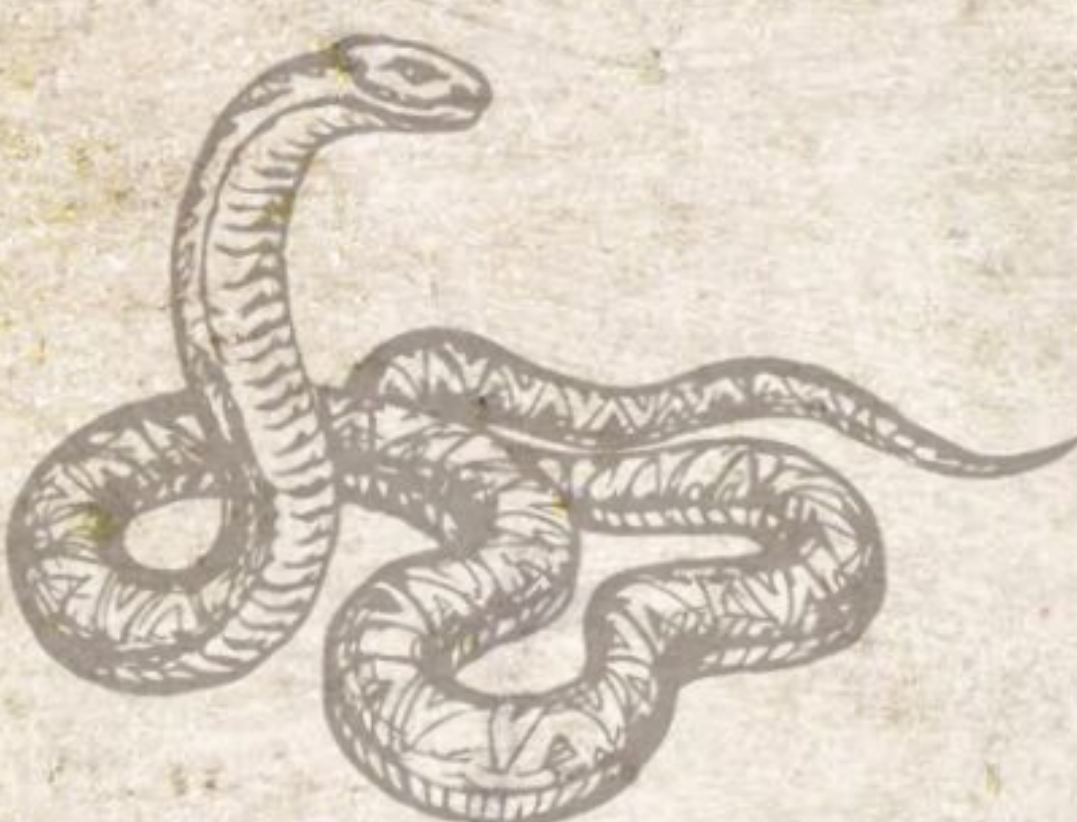


the baby, she let out a loud cry, which alerted the child’s mother. When she saw the scene in the room, she too screamed, which brought her husband. The lord drew his sword, and killed the dog.

However, when the three approached the cradle, they saw that the child was unharmed and sound asleep. They also saw the body of the snake that was killed by Guinefort. Ashamed by what they had done to the faithful dog, they put his body into a well in front of the castle gate, placed a large heap of stones over it, and planted some trees nearby as a memorial.

When the local peasants heard of the dog’s story they began to visit the place, venerating the dog as a martyr in hope that it would intercede on their behalf. Many reported miracles occurring at the site of his grave, and eventually locals declared the dog a saint for the protection of infants. Although St. Guinefort has never been recognized by the Catholic Church, the holy dog’s faithful followers paid homage to him all the way into the 20th century.

**HAVE YOU
EVER HEARD
OF AN
ANIMAL
BEING MADE
A SAINT?
IT REALLY
HAPPENED!**







Djémila, Algeria

Cuicul in eastern Algeria was founded in 96 AD by the Roman Emperor Nerva. An arch celebrating Emperor Caracalla, his mother Julia Domna, and his deceased father Septimius Severus was erected in 216 AD. Cuicul was conquered during the Arab invasion in the seventh century when it was renamed Djémila, meaning 'beautiful'. In 1839, Ferdinand Philippe, son of King Louis-Philippe of France, commanded a military expedition and came across the ruins of the ancient town. He planned to take the triumphal arch back to Paris but died shortly after, and for years the site was forgotten.



A Ship in the Desert?

Searching for California's Lost Viking Ship

|| By Kerry Sullivan



View of the Salton Sea past the desert in California.

BACK in the days when much of the map was still blank, explorers would follow any waterway in the hopes of finding the next great passage. Yet some rivers can be deceiving, especially those in the volatile region west of the Rocky Mountains. According to local lore, a great ship is stranded in California's Salton Sea Basin on the edge of the Sonoran Desert. Despite having no concrete proof that such a ship actually exists, there is a great deal of debate over its possible origins.

Some say it is a Spanish galleon that was searching for an alternative way around "California Island" (a common misconception in the 16th century). This ship would naturally be filled with treasure. Others claim that the ship belonged to early Viking explorers who managed to

navigate a Medieval Northwest Passage, and come down the western coast of North America before being stranded. The only way we will ever know for certain is to find the ship.

RUMORS OF A STRANDED VIKING SHIP

Rumors about a desert ship have circulated for years. For this particular ship, the most concrete verification of those rumors came in 1933. Local librarian and nature enthusiast Myrtle Botts was out hiking in the Anza-Borrego desert with her husband. It was early March and the desert was alive with the vibrant colors of wildflower blooms. They set up camp near Agua Caliente and were greeted by a passing prospector. The man had not struck gold but he claimed to have found

a ship which was lodged into the rocky face of Canebrake Canyon. Allegedly the wooden vessel sported the carving of a serpentine figure on its prow. He also noticed some impressions on the sides where shields would have been attached. In summary, he believed he had found a Viking ship.



Allegedly the wooden vessel sported the carving of a serpentine figure on its prow.



The Canyon collapsed and the ship was buried in the rubble.

vstewarthenderson / Adobe Stock

The Botts went to see if the prospector's tale was true, and sure enough they saw what appeared to be the stern of a ship. However, it was too high up the canyon and the Botts did not have the necessary means for such a rugged hike. So they left and decided to come back in a few days. Unfortunately, that very day, a 6.4 magnitude earthquake struck Southern California. The Canyon collapsed and the ship was buried in the rubble.

There are many places to cast doubt on the Botts' story. Most notably, how would a ship get

into the middle of the desert? There are several possible explanations, but one with some plausibility claims there was a large tide from the Gulf of California which collided with an exceptionally heavy runoff from the Colorado River at the delta. This abundance of water produced a flood which broke through the land barrier to the Salton Sea. The flood may have carried the ship into the Salton Sea basin and when the water retreated the ship was left stranded in the desert.

This sequence of events is not as improbable as it may seem.

The Salton Sea Basin, which sits 270 feet below sea level, appears to have been a naturally made receptacle for floodwaters. This would have also contributed to the notion that California was an island.

One of the leading experts on the desert ship is John Grasson, a self-declared 'explorer of legends and lore'. Grasson and the lost desert ship have been featured on two shows on the Science Channel, *Mysteries of the Missing* and *Unexplained and Unexplored*, as well as the Travel Channel's *Legend Hunter* and *America Unearthed*.

**The flood may have carried the
ship into the Salton
Sea basin.**

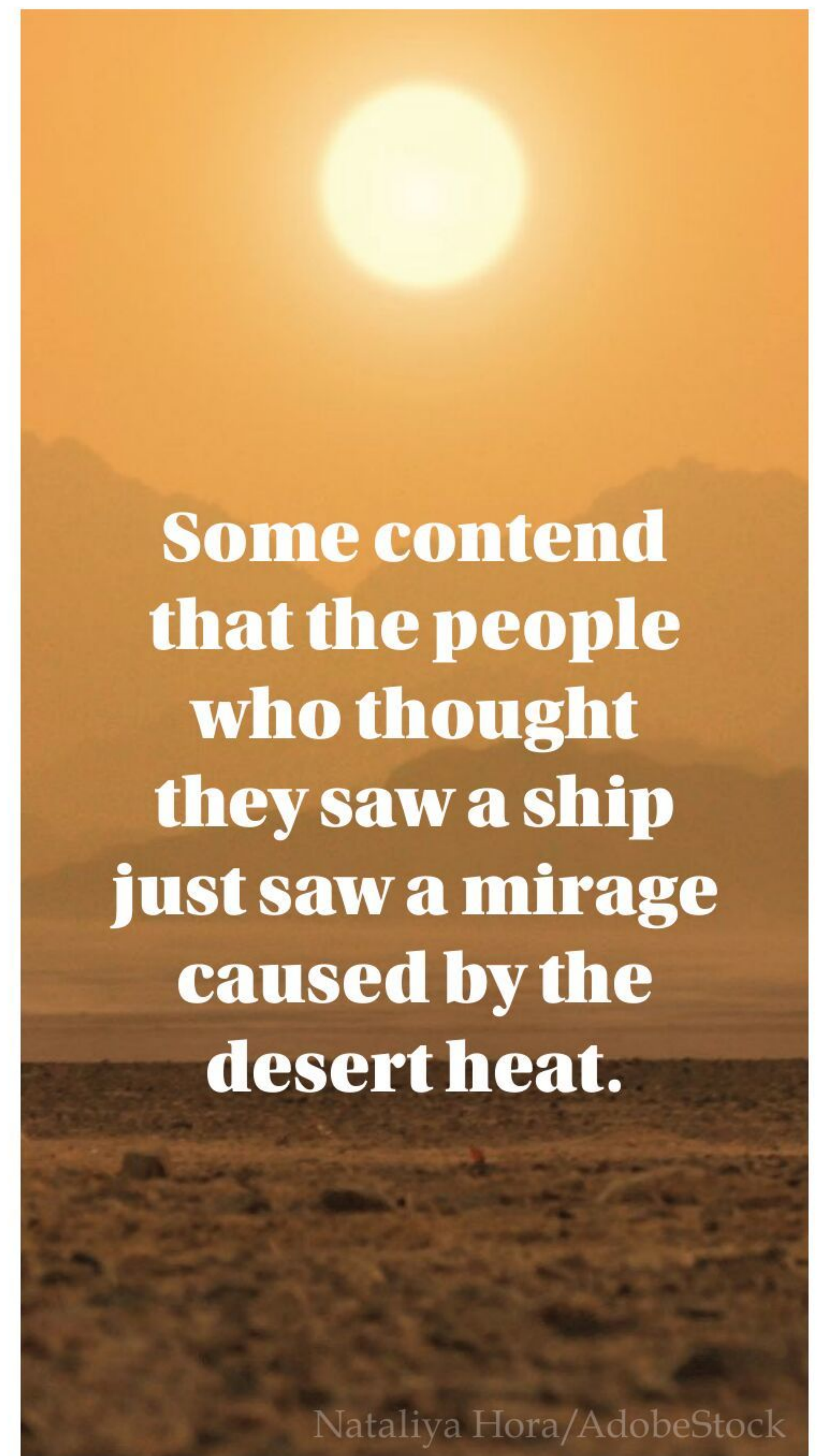


FOREIGNERS ROAMING THE LANDS

Some contend that the people who thought they saw a ship just saw a mirage caused by the desert heat. However Grasson maintains that there is genuine evidence of foreigners roaming these lands centuries before history would suggest. As one example, he cites a 1939 book by Dane Coolidge called *The Last of the Seris*, which is devoted to the Native Americans who lived around the Gulf of California. Coolidge relates a legend of the Seri people: “Came From Afar Men—the strange whalers who cooked whale meat in an

enormous iron pot, ate it and drank the oil.” This is, according to Coolidge, “a record of the old Norsemen who visited the west coast of Mexico long before the Spanish came.”

Grasson does not claim to know for certain whether it is a Viking ship or a Spanish galleon stranded out in the desert, but he is adamant that there is indeed a ship somewhere out there. He does reject some of the wilder claims about the desert ship however. For instance, he doubts it belonged to King Solomon or one of the lost tribes of Israel.



Yet he also rejects some ideas that seem probable as well. In a guide to California published during the Great Depression by the Works Progress Administration, author Kane Springs writes about a ‘shipwreck’ on the edge of the Salton Sea, saying that there was “a boat built in 1862 by a Colorado River mining company, transported part way across the desert by ox team, and then abandoned because of the difficulty of the journey from San Geronio Pass to the Colorado River.” After a century of weathering in the desert, the vessel would come to resemble something more ancient. Yet Grasson doubts that this story has anything to do with the lost ship of the desert.

So the search continues, and the legend of the lost ship of the desert has neither been completely proven nor disproven – at least until more evidence is found. ■

HISTORY

We inherit it, we make it,
and we are destined to
become part of it

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ANCIENT ORIGINS[®] MAGAZINE



3,000-Year-Old Mechanical Dog at the MET

|| BY CECILIA BOGAARD

WHILE we've all heard about the ancient Egyptian fondness of cats, they were dog lovers too! In ancient Egypt, dogs were used as pets, companions, for hunting, and as guards, and they were frequently depicted in Egyptian artwork. There is even evidence of dog burials, mostly as company for their masters, and killing a dog who was collared was a capital crime.

Not surprisingly, the Egyptians named their dogs as people do today, and they even inscribed these names on leather collars. There was also a long tradition of dog mummification. It's even been said that the ancient Egyptians were "obsessed" with their dogs, with the mummification of millions of dogs and dog sacrifices provided as examples of this fatal attraction.

The ancient Egyptians are often credited with the domestication of the dog, and there are several breeds which experts agree originated in the area, including the Saluki, the Basenji, Ibizan

Hound, Pharaoh Hound, Baladi Street Dog, and the Egyptian Sheepdog. Known as *iwiw* in ancient Egypt, scholars say that people expressed their grief over the death of a family dog in the same way as they did for the death of humans, with family members shaving their whole bodies, including their eyebrows.

The MET Museum in New York is currently home to an ancient Egyptian mechanical dog. Dating back to about 1390 BC to 1353 BC, the mechanical hunting dog depicted in elephant ivory is just over seven inches long. Whether it was a toy or some kind of votive offering,

we'll never know. Experts have concluded, however, that it was created in the New Kingdom, while Amenhotep III was in power. This was a time of wealth and stability in Egypt and is remembered as the pinnacle for Egyptian art and power, and the mechanical dog is a fantastic example of the attention to detail of craftspeople in ancient Egypt.

The mechanical dog is a fantastic example of the attention to detail of craftspeople in ancient Egypt.



The mechanical dog artifact has captured a dog in motion in a truly lifelike manner. Controlled by a lever hidden beneath the dog's chest to create the action of barking, when manipulated the mechanical dog opens its mouth to reveal a red tongue and two teeth. There are holes in the artifact through which a type of thong was tied. The MET claims that this artifact was probably a "magical object" when it was first made. The object is on view at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York within Gallery 119, a space which features objects from the reign of Amenhotep III.■

Photos: Mechanical Dog. Public Domain.

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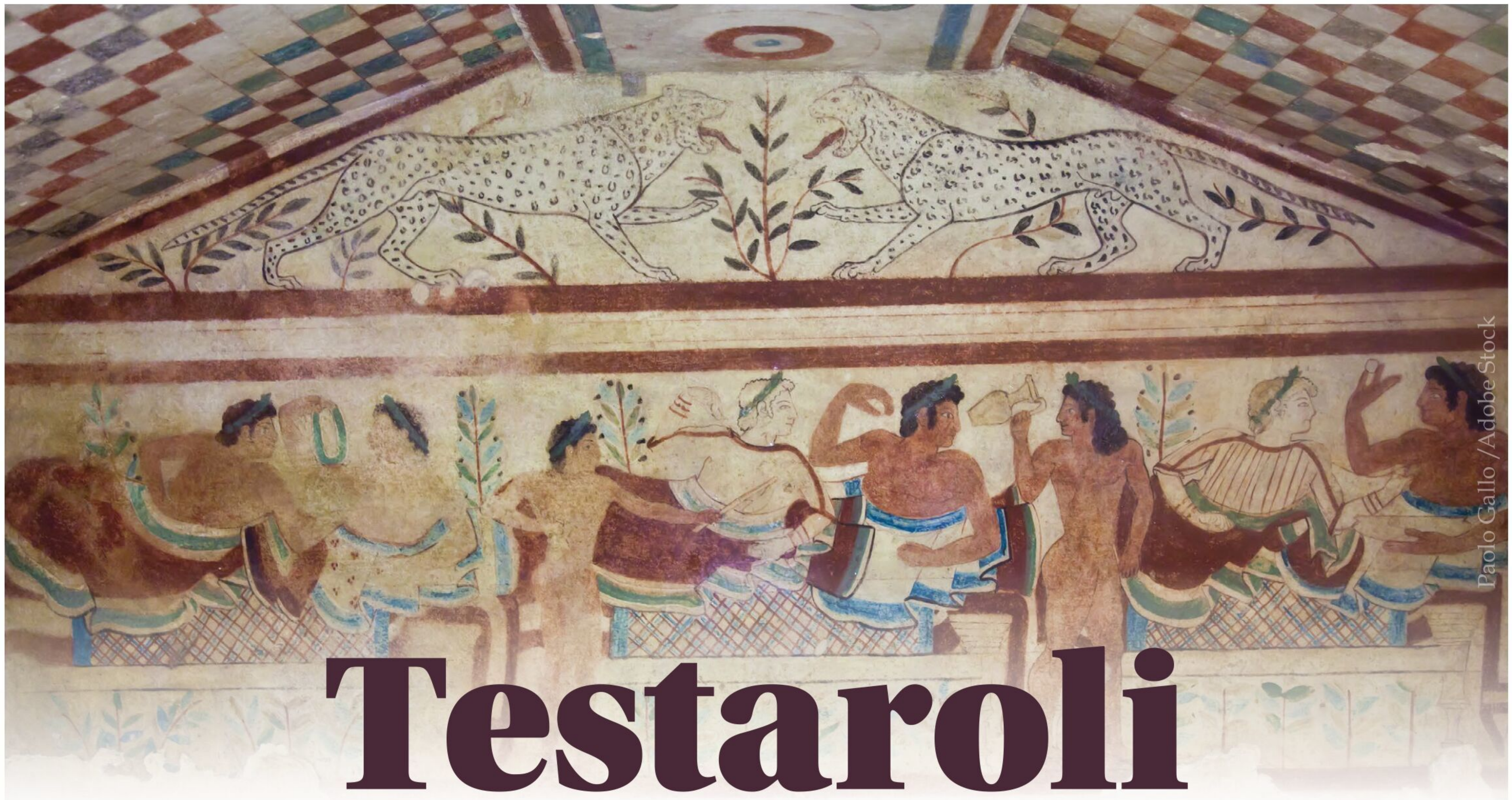
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Testaroli

Ancient Etruscan Pasta is a Comforting Mid-Week Meal

Academy of Taste



**ALICIA
MCDERMOTT**

Alicia is a researcher, editor, and writer with Ancient Origins. She's a lifelong learner and has worked in education, tourism, and anthropology. Traveling throughout Bolivia, Peru, Colombia, and Ecuador, Alicia has increased her knowledge of Pre-Colombian sites as well as life in modern Andean cultures.

Testaroli is one of the earliest recorded pastas. This simple but tasty dish has been traced back to the ancient Etruscan civilization which lived between the Tiber and Arno rivers west and south of the Apennines in Italy between 800 BC to 390 BC.

The Romans considered the Etruscans heavy drinkers who were obsessed with feasting and having a good time; however, this culture was particularly



talented in the culinary realm, with many of their techniques and recipes faithfully passed down through the millennia.

The rich soil, proximity to the sea, and temperatures of the land inhabited by the Etruscans provided them with ideal cultivation conditions. Etruscan orchards brimmed with a variety of delicious fruits including apples, melons, and berries, as well as an abundance of olives. Their fields were filled with grains, such as spelt and barley, and they grew numerous herbs and vegetables, such as fennel, basil, mint, garlic, peas, and onions. All of this produce accompanied their rich variety of fish and meat dishes. Although the Romans may have been reluctant to admit it, they learned a lot from Etruscan culinary traditions – including the

art and delicious results of pasta making.

Today testaroli could be considered a comfort food with humble origins. It starts with a simple flour and water batter that's traditionally thinly spread across a special terra cotta cooking surface called a *testo*.

We don't all have access to a *testo* at home, so a common substitution for cooking testaroli is to use a cast iron skillet. To make testaroli, the batter is poured out in batches on the hot cooking surface and then cut into diamonds, before being plunged into hot water. The ingredients and methods used to create testaroli are simple and often familiar to a modern chef. But that doesn't mean that testaroli is bland or boring – in fact, it is a great

beginning for a tasty, filling meal!

Traditionally, testaroli will be served in Tuscany with basil pesto or a drizzle of olive oil and a topping of pecorino cheese. However, the Etruscans had a variety of herbs and cheeses available, so you can follow the lead of many great chefs and see which toppings you prefer with your testaroli. Two delicious herb and cheese combinations that I enjoy with my testaroli are basil with pecorino cheese and mint and feta. Other herbs that work well and were available to the ancient Etruscans are thyme, rosemary, and parsley.

No matter which toppings you add to your testaroli, this is definitely one of the more unique yet simple pastas you may encounter – so it is absolutely worth a try!

Etruscan statue.



The Romans considered the Etruscans heavy drinkers who were obsessed with feasting and having a good time; however, this culture was particularly talented in the culinary realm, with many of their techniques and recipes faithfully passed down through the millennia.

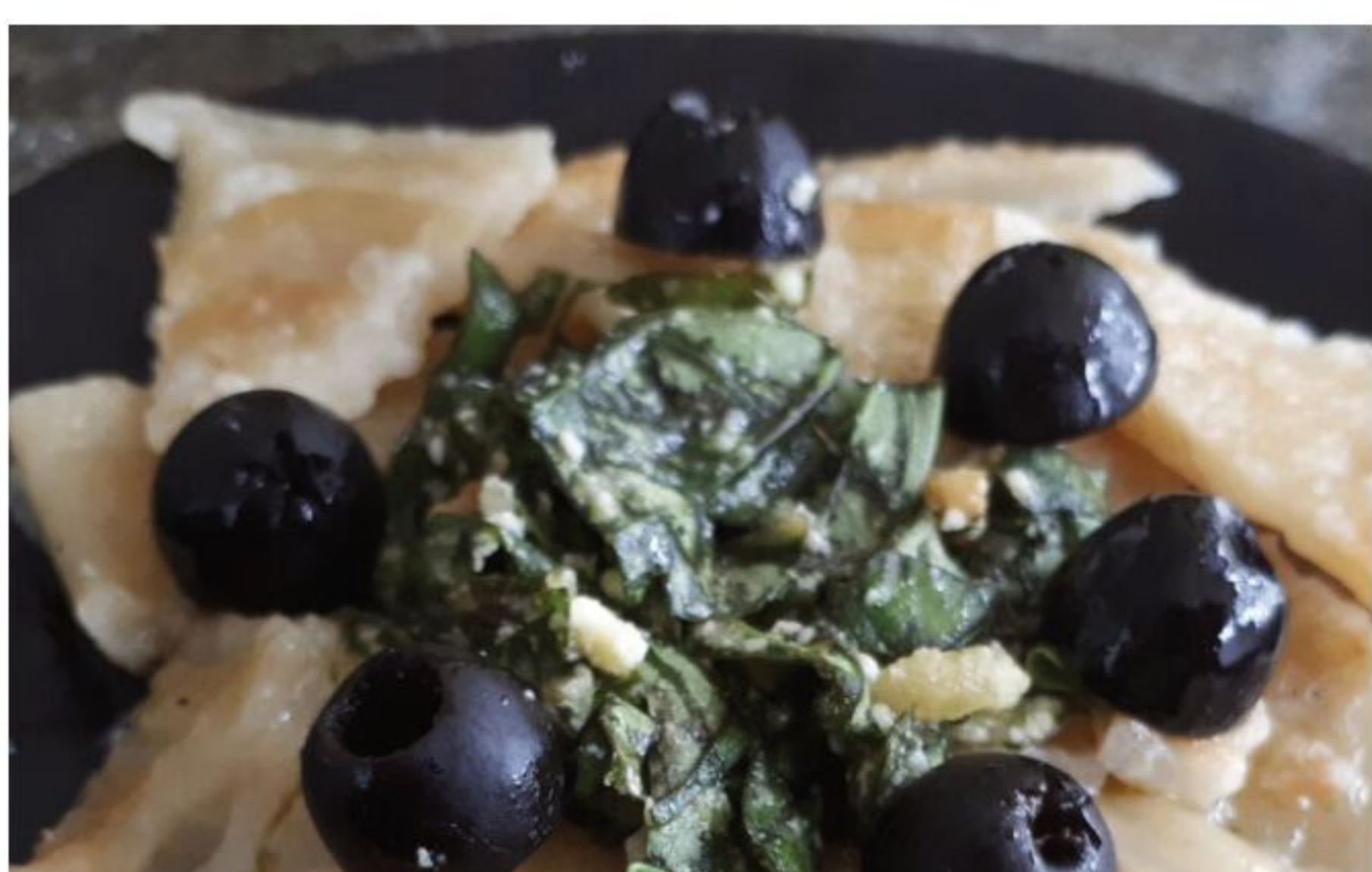


Ingredients:

(Makes 2-3 servings)

- **2 Cups Flour (Spelt, if possible)**
- **3 Cups Water**
- **Olive Oil, for frying and serving**
- **¼ Cup Fresh Basil**
- **2-3 Cloves Garlic**
- **¼ Cup Pecorino Cheese, grated**

- Heat the cast iron skillet at a medium temperature until it is thoroughly hot – this may take up to 10 minutes, depending on the size of your skillet.
- Mix the flour and water well to create a batter.
- Pour a tablespoon of olive oil onto the skillet and swirl it around to coat the pan.
- Pour ½ cup of the batter into the middle of the skillet and swirl it or spread it around to cover the majority of the bottom of the pan. The idea is to make a sheet of batter which is no thicker than a crepe.
- Cook the batter for four minutes on one side then use a thin metal spatula to carefully turn your testaroli disc over. Once it is turned over, cook it for one more minute.
- Remove the testaroli disc and allow it to sit until you are ready to cut it.
- Use a knife or pizza cutter to cut the testaroli disc into medium-sized diamond shapes.
- Finely chop the basil and garlic and grate the pecorino cheese.
- Bring a small pot of water to a boil.
- Place the testaroli into the water and let it boil for 1-2 minutes.



Notes

- All-purpose flour is fine to use if you don't have spelt flour.
- If you don't have a cast iron skillet, you could try using a good flat skillet or a crepe maker.
- For smaller skillets, you may want to use only ¼ cup of the batter for each batch, to keep the testaroli discs thin.
- To make more or less of the mixture you can change the measurements, just be sure to use two parts flour and three parts water.
- Each side of a fried testaroli will have a different texture. One side might be cratered a little while the other side will likely be flatter, almost like a tortilla.
- Be gentle when moving the boiled testaroli pieces to avoid tearing them.

Testaroli

Method

- Carefully remove the testaroli with a slotted spoon and let it drain.
- Top the testaroli with the basil, cheese, and a drizzle of olive oil.



Paul/AdobeStock



QUIZ ANSWERS!

CHARIOTS OF THE GODS:

HORSES IN ANCIENT GREEK MYTH

1. Arion, the colt born from Demeter when she transformed herself into a mare to escape the unwanted attentions of Poseidon, who promptly turned himself into a stallion, and Xanthus, Achilles' one war horse, was given the gift to talk by Hera when she prophesized Achilles' pending death.
2. Pegasus, another of Poseidon's offspring, who carried Zeus' thunderbolts. Pegasus was born from the neck of Medusa when Perseus slayed her.
3. Pyrois ("The Fiery One"), Aeos ("He who turns the sky"), Aethon ("Blazing"), and Phlegon ("Burning").
4. Aithon (Aethon), Phlogios (Phlogios), Konabos (Conabus), and Phobos (Phobus) drew the chariot of the god Ares.
5. Skyphios, created by Poseidon.
6. Lampus (Firebright) and Phaëton (Daybright).
7. Balius and Xanthus were sired by the West Wind Zephyros. Zeus' chariot was drawn by the four winds, transformed into horses: Boreas the North-Wind, Zephyros the West, Notos the South, and Euros the East Wind. Nike was Zeus' charioteer.
8. Diomedes, King of Thrace - the horses were captured by Hercules, who fed Diomedes to them.
9. Castor and Pollux, the Dioskouroi brothers of Helen of Sparta, but the women were promised to their cousins, Lynceus and Idas. In a battle three cousins died but Castor requested Zeus to share his immortality with his twin brother and they became a constellation.
10. Hermes rode Hades' chariot and returned Persephone to Demeter.



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